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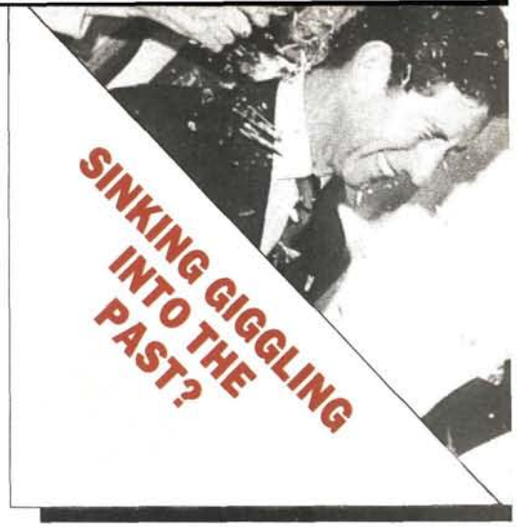
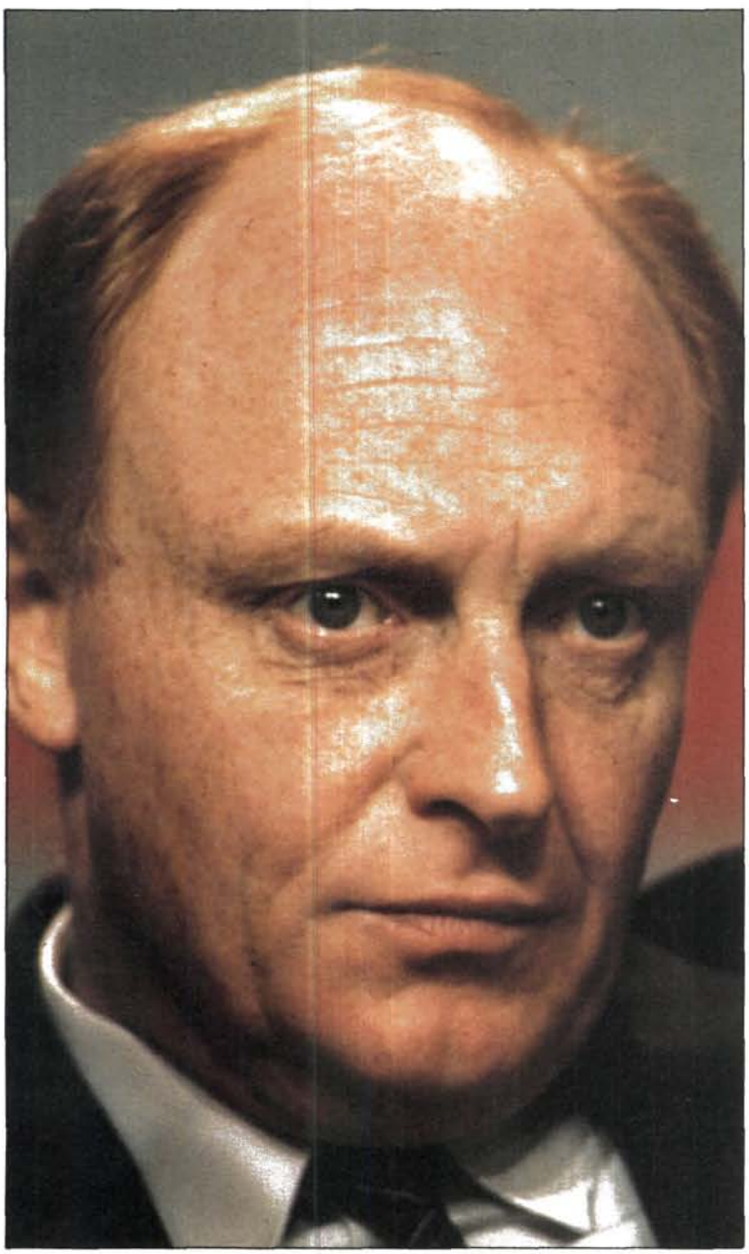


SINKING GIGGLING INTO THE PAST?

KINNOCK TELLS...



The NS:
'I didn't choose to make a choice (over national security) in these circumstances'

The left:
'The enemy of idealism is zealotry'

The electorate:
'I do want an election as quickly as possible because she's lethal'

Tactical voters:
'Grow up'

EXCLUSIVE

Rex Features

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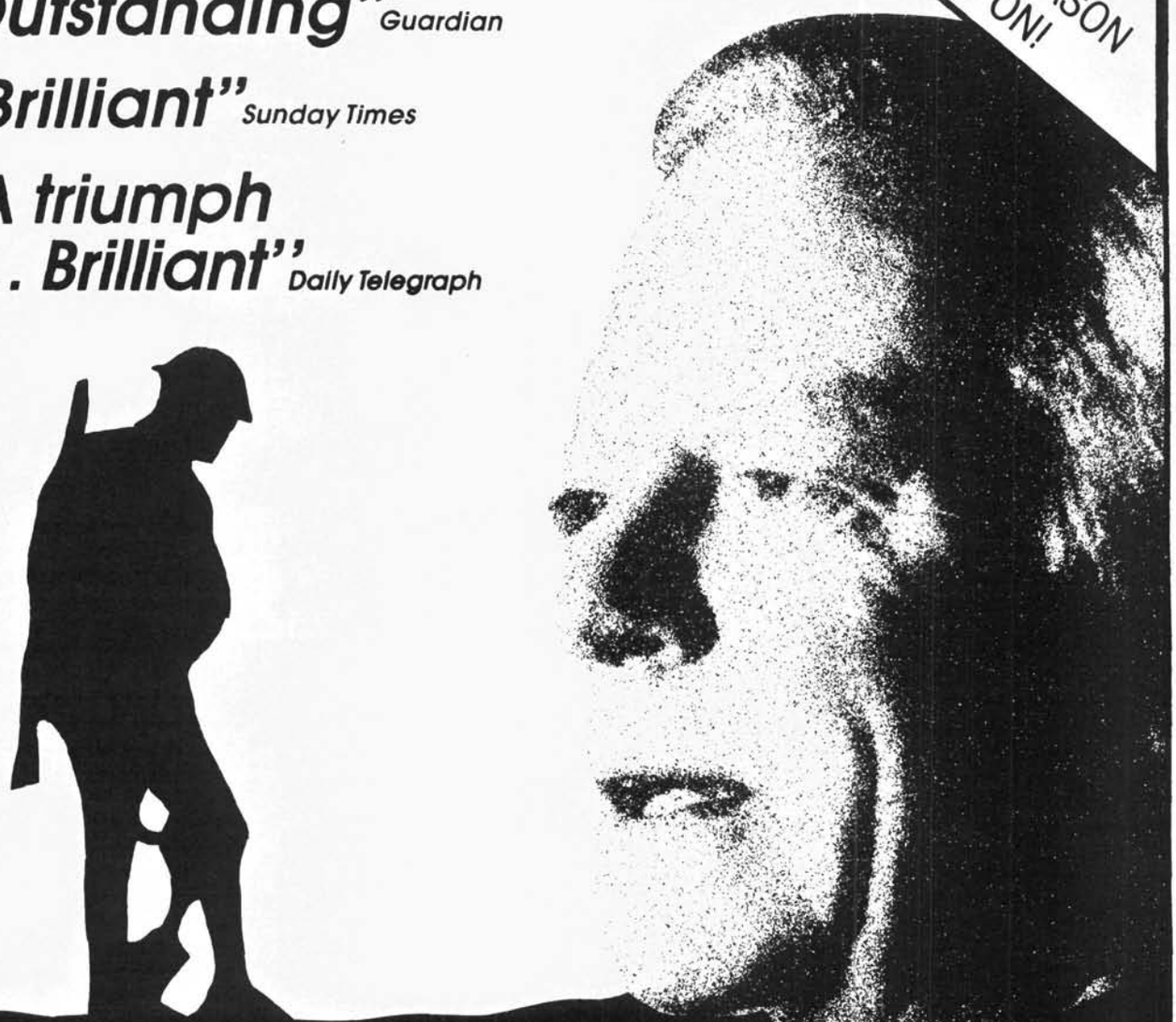

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NEW STATESMAN

Vol 113 No 2916 13 February 1987

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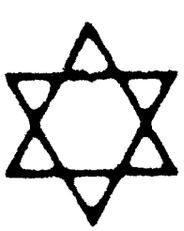
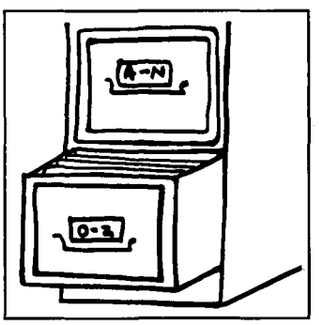


The left in West Germany after the election; the right in South Africa before the election; and is what's going on in China left or right? Plus a furious row over *Perdition*, Zionism and anti-semitism — Ken Loach, the play's director, writes

New rights from the left



HUMAN OR civil rights have occupied the high ground in public debate, and not just because of the events surrounding the spy satellite affair. Sir Edward Gardner's modest Bill designed to incorporate the European Convention on Human Rights into British law was much talked up, but in the end failed by six votes last Friday to achieve the necessary support of 100 MPs to secure a second reading in the House of Commons. It did not attract much opposition — indeed, MPs of all parties voted for it — but it clearly didn't attract much backing, either. It would, for all its modesty, have helped the individual citizen in future clashes with the state or with powerful corporations, and it was too bad that enough parliamentarians did not give up their Friday afternoon to see it through.

But the tide appears to be turning, for all that. The spy satellite affair — the outcome of which remains unclear — did show some real support for libertarian values in the debate that has followed it, and has exposed those politicians and commentators of the right who have argued that revelation of any information designated as a state secret is tantamount to treachery as knee-jerk reactionaries.

The point was well made in a piece in the *Financial Times* of 9 February, which reported Dr Ray Cline, a former deputy director of the Central Intelligence Agency, as saying that there was no reason why the public should not be made aware that the UK was developing a spy satellite of its own, given that it was 'a natural development and a sign of the explosion in applications of space technology'. The same piece quoted Professor William Burrows of New York University and Professor Paul Bracken of Yale as viewing the revelations as (in Professor Burrows's words) 'less than earth shattering': these comments further illuminate the point we have made before that the US assumes a much higher degree of public knowledge and debate on defence as a right, and as a right which should be guarded and furthered by, among other processes, the practice of journalism.

The issue of rights goes further than that, of course. Within the left, more attention is now being focused on the question of real economic rights — to an income, to a job, to social benefits — as the necessary underpinning for real freedom. When David Blunkett, the Sheffield Council leader, spoke last weekend at Labour's local government conference of Labour local authorities struggling to preserve services and employment over the past seven years, he was talking of the preservation of rights which would otherwise have been eroded even more than they have been already. This aspect of rights is one which the left must now give still greater prominence — and it can be aided in doing so by pointing out that the political right seems so little wedded to the liberal rights to which it has professed attachment that it can compromise them when the Prime Minister seeks to smear the left with the stigma of traitor.

As Austin Mitchell points out — 'New Rights Diary', p4 — there now exists an inchoate, barely articulated mood for a greater degree of individual liberty and individual say which may be the political effect of greater economic independence which many now feel they enjoy. Such a mood may well cut against old Labour corporatist values as well as new right authoritarianism, and it can be uncomfortable for the left: it is not one which the left can ignore or suppress.

In that spirit, a second chance to vote in a genuinely liberal (and Liberal) measure is presented next Friday, when Archie Kirkwood, the Liberal MP, presents his 'Access to Personal Files' Bill for its second reading in the House. The Bill complements the Data Protection Act, which comes fully into force in November and which allows access to personal information held on computer: it does so by extending the same access to paper files, still containing much of the information which defines the citizen in the eyes of the state and its agencies.

The main records it covers are medical, housing, education, social work, government benefits, employment, bank, building societies and credit records: people would have the right to see information which had been recorded about them after the Bill becomes law, and to have inaccurate information amended.

Kirkwood, in researching his Bill, has found that since the 1982 Australian Freedom of Information Act came into force, not much use has been made of the right: the Australian Department of Health predicted some 16,000 requests for information a year, and received, in 1983/84, only 249. The Department of Social Security had more — 2,700 in 1983/84 — but also reported a drop in the number of appeals, as people understood the criteria on which decisions were taken.

Government departments here are predictably discouraging, throwing up objections on cost and inconvenience grounds. But those doctors, social workers and others who already, voluntarily, open their records say the relationship with their clients improve. Not surprisingly. It is another modest measure which deserves immodest support. □

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NEW RIGHTS DIARY

For a party which believes that socialism is 'about' freedom our attitude to its nearer shores, human rights, is curious. We're agin 'em. When offered an easy and obvious way of strengthening rights by incorporating the European Convention into British law, so that people no longer have to trek to Strasbourg to exercise them, we managed a unique display of churlishness in our eagerness to do it down. With public opinion two to one in its favour, we rushed to kill the bill instead of leaving that embarrassment to a government which was going to do it anyway. Our speakers were forced to parrot Tory myths about Parliament protecting rights, and judges being embarrassed by politics, even though rights proffer one of the few available weapons to resist the Thatcher counter-revolution. The Gardner Rights Bill was defeated last Friday because fewer Labour MPs supported it than any other party. Nor is this just passing incompetence. Our attitude to rights is part of a syndrome. We say we will advance freedom only by methods growing rusty, and enlarge it only in ways people are becoming doubtful about. What they tell the pollsters they want isn't on our menu.

Socialism, in whatever form is currently fashionable — liberty, equality, fraternity, feminism or simple state ownership — we see as being advanced through Parliament, the majority its instrument, the mandate its lever. It is prescribed. It comes *de haut en bas*. That approach springs from the days of a great block of committed Labour votes whose interests are advanced by the state. Some of that situation remains. To reverse the counter-revolution its machinery has a major task. Yet it is failing. It isn't as readily and universally accepted as it once was. The state is seen as an alien abstraction, the powerful executive as a restriction on freedom. When it comes to the real test, of delivering growth and well-being, our system has manifestly failed. So party bases have eroded, a bigger floating vote now evaluates parties more coolly, prescription politics are less acceptable. Thatcherite populism and Bennite ultra-democracy both respond, albeit by offering stones, to the same stirring: the desire to be involved, to influence, to be heard.

○

Via those *mea culpas* which pass for thinking in the Labour movement, we have decided that socialism is 'about' freedom. Roy Hattersley (*Choose Freedom*, 1987) and Bryan Gould (*Socialism and Freedom*, 1985) have both emphasised the obvious: freedom implies the means to operate it. Others seek to integrate markets, or a John Rawls-type balancing process into the definition. All are necessary in a society obsessed with differentials and consumer differences, where equality is a less saleable commodity. Yet it is still only a change of prescription. Even those who have grasped that socialism is a process, not a steady state, have not moved beyond the possibility that socialists will be in charge of it, determining the balances on behalf of others, handing out what *they* think right to the huddled masses, yearning to be free to decide for themselves.

○

David Selbourne (in his new book, *Left Behind: Journeys into British Politics**) alone has grasped that socialism might also be 'about' right. Yet even he has not ventured to the further conclusion that the new politics are less and less those of *prescription*, more and more those of *empowerment*. As the people, even 'our' people, achieve a certain level of well being and independence they become less keen on being handed things, more irritated by the 'nanny' state. They want to choose, to be involved, to feel they are heard on government, the environment, local matters and at work. The broad over-simplified choice between parties every five years is no longer enough. They are choosing as consumers. A society which heeds their desires will be less rational and tidy. Incumbent parties and politicians will be inconvenienced. Yet the tide is irresistable and Labour, busily developing prescriptions for the new sub-class who certainly need them because of what Mrs Thatcher has done, must also win the support of a new middle (né working) class which sees itself differently.

Other parties have seen the change; the need to make government a political version of the Consumer's Association. The Alliance have made such a fetish of it they have nothing else to offer. The New Zealand Labour Party promised, and is painfully delivering, a Bill of Rights. The French Socialists touched a popular nerve with *autogestion* (self-management) and decentralisation. We have merely shuffled with embarrassment, reacting like a government-in-exile to this awkward phenomenon.

○

We are squeamish about environmental issues because jobs come first. We have been slow, apart from Scotland where survival was at stake, to take up decentralisation because we look to power nationally. We are doubtful about democracy at work. It conflicts with the unions. We are churlish about participation in housing, planning or consumerism in local services because it will inconvenience Labour councils. Open government, personal privacy, official secrets are good issues for opposition but because we did the opposite in government and don't have positive plans for the future we look insincere. We allowed the Tories to grab the populist issue of union reform and we haven't retaliated by proposing to give the companies back to their shareholders.

Paternalism lumbers on. Many of these are middle-class issues. Yet we neither see how our people are becoming interested, nor grasp the importance of extending empowerment into new areas: democratising the professions, backing patients against doctors and hospitals, consumers against utilities, stimulating populist hostility (often based on real grievances) against the banks, financial institutions, big business and scale generally. Even on our major problem, restraining inflation, we have never looked beyond the corporate state. We could involve the whole community in decisions on that great trade-off between benefits, jobs, growth on the one hand and pay on the other.

○

Society and institutions are out of kilter. A more diverse, pluralistic, less governable society is developing within the constraints of a monolithic system, supporting an overweening executive. The final illustration of its follies was the 1983 result, a majority vote against Mrs Thatcher which gave her dictatorial powers. Even now the reaction has not been a sixties-style surge to the alternative monolith, but into alienation, indecision and the futility of third party voting. The electorate are trying to tell us something.

Being a symptom, not a solution, the Alliance will blight every hope placed on it (even David Owen's). Integrate empowerment into our own philosophy, as the logical outcome of our whole approach of raising up the people, see it as an essential part of making ourselves relevant and we end up with — the Great Empowerment — the next stage of socialism. It won't be the planned, rational, society we once hoped for. Nor even the withering away of the state. Yet it will correspond more exactly with what the people actually want and allow them to feel more involved and to make their own choices. More mundanely it could also pull us back into the mainstream of a society which, rightly or wrongly, has moved beyond Attlee and Crosland and is even moving beyond Hattersley and Gould.

Austin Mitchell

Austin Mitchell is Labour MP for Great Grimsby.

**To be published by Cape, 26 February, £10.95*

ROGER WODDIS

Thank the Lord

'It is only a matter of time before Britain becomes an Eastern-bloc-style so-called democratic republic.' — Lord Hailsham on Britain under Labour.
'It is essential to further encourage openness.' — Mikhail Gorbachev

Oh, you can scoff and say he's bonkers,
But as I was only saying to Beryl,
If the worst should happen and Kinnock
conquers,
The whole of Guildford will be in peril.

I see you pale. You'll turn even whiter
When everyone's forced to do what they're told;
There'll be no stopping that freckled blighter,
Now he's collected his Moscow gold.

Think what'll happen when the power is his,
Too late then to raise your hackles.
We're facing *glasnost* — whatever that is —
Probably the Russian word for shackles.

All our freedoms will go for a burton,
We can say goodbye to human rights;
Once they've dragged us behind the Curtain,
They'll have our bobbies in ballet tights.

But thank the Lord we've a lord purveying
That good old garbage, the Zinoviev letter;
Though the media's muzzled, it's no good
saying
Anything we can do, Neil can do better.

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BBC raid 'illegal'

AS WELL as being incompetent, irresponsible and iniquitous, the Special Branch raid on the BBC may have been illegal. As a result, the BBC could, if it wished, sue the police for damages.

The Professor of Scots law at Edinburgh University, Robert Black, has investigated the sorry events at Queen Margaret Drive in Glasgow the weekend before last and come to the firm conclusion that, because of a legal technicality which no-one understood at the time, the Special Branch's three search warrants were wrongly applied for and wrongly granted.

He points out that the provision under which the warrants were issued — Section 9 of the 1911 Official Secrets Act — requires that application be made to a justice of the peace. The warrants against the BBC were all granted by Scotland's more senior law officers, sheriffs.

Professor Black, who is himself an acting sheriff, says that although most statutes include a provision extending the definition of justice of the peace to include a sheriff, this is not the case with the Official Secrets Act. Therefore the three warrants issued by sheriffs against the BBC were invalid.

He has checked every relevant statute he can find and is certain that his conclusion, however surprising, is correct. He believes that it is now open to the BBC to sue for damages caused by the wrongful detention of its property and the disturbance of the search. His point has been taken up by the leader of the Social Democratic Party, Dr David Owen, who has written to the Lord Advocate in Edinburgh querying the legality of the search warrants. The Lord Advocate, according to a spokesperson this week, remains satisfied with the procedure used.

The BBC's lawyers declined to comment. The chairman of the Scottish Council for Civil Liberties, Richard Kinsey, was not so coy. He said: 'It would seem that not only did nobody know who was doing what, but whoever was doing it, didn't know what they were doing.'

Rob Edwards

Les mystères de Paris

Paris

LAURENT FABIUS loved to boast that 'the socialists' originality lies in their moral standards'. Yet, for nearly a year now, with the suspense of a thriller, a national scandal has been splashing them, smearing their good name. Christian Nucci, Minister of Co-operation in the former government, has been convicted of embezzling public money. The association 'Carrefour du Development' he created in 1983, when he was in the socialist government, has ended in 1986 in a political and financial scandal.

The aim of the association was 'to promote culture'. Its original budget amounted to 16m FF, but it was later revealed that 70m FF had passed through it. For what purpose? To finance Nucci's political campaign for his constituency in the department of Isere? (Cheques for 394,500 FF tend to prove it.) To pay for —as is whispered — mercenaries in Chad and the expenses of an African summit in Burundi? One thing is certain: the association acquired an imposing historical castle — the 'Chateau d'Ortie' in Cher — for 1m FF.

The first person to be suspected in this affair was Yves Chalier, the treasurer of the association, who was Nucci's 'chef de cabinet' (in France, this highly envied position is more a 'head of the minister's brain trust' than a private parliamentary secretary). Chalier flew first to London, then to Brazil. From his hiding-place, Chalier sent a five-page letter, accusing Christian Nucci and other prominent members of the government. Moreover, he could produce, he threatened, 'two cubic metres of compromising documents.'

Jean-Pierre Michaud, a judge with a reputation for implacable efficiency, was appointed for the case. He worked at it with a virtuous rage, to date convicting 71 people — including high officials like Jacques Delebois from the DST (the national — and secret — police), who was stripped, searched and manacled when arrested like an ordinary criminal. He was accused of producing a real passport for Chalier with a false identity.

In this regrettable business, each revelation throws up more dirt. Whatever the legal mechanism which will now turn, Nucci is already 'dishonoured and dead for the political world', as Philippe Boucher wrote in *Le Monde*.

The right-wing press helped this scandal to bloom, exulting in a socialist's fall — until Charles Pasqua, Minister of the Interior in Chirac's government, was implicated. Pasqua, like Nucci, was born in Corsica, an island with a tradition for clannish and complex networks, which, like the mafia, run gambling casinos all over the world — particularly in Brazil, where Chalier found shelter. Pasqua is said to have met Chalier privately before his flight from France, and given him instructions. Rumours also spread that Francois Mitterrand saw Chalier, although the president denies the fact.

Political adversaries are capitalising on the story by hurling scandalous allegations at each other. While much of it seems true, they have chosen this time a very pitiful battlefield indeed. But in this lingering winter 'the affair', as it is called, fills the press daily and serves as a good serial in the century-old tradition of Eugene Sue and 'Les mystères de Paris'. The latest episode heard Pasqua cry 'you will not bring me to suicide'.

While more is to come, one man, Raymond Barre, patiently waits in the shadow, until he can appear as the unblemished 'saviour'. Will that be the next episode?

Yvette Marin

Nukewatch south west

IN A DIRECT challenge to the nuclear industry's own monitoring system, six local authorities round the Bristol Channel have decided to establish an independent network of radiation checks. With a start-up cost of about £130,000, it will be the most ambitious such council scheme in the country.

The agreement, which equally crosses political boundaries, links Avon, Somerset and Gloucestershire in England with Gwent, South and West Glamorgan in Wales. Their common concern is the cluster of nuclear sites in the region

— Oldbury and Berkeley power stations on the Severn Estuary and Hinkley Point, the largest, on the Somerset coast. Hinkley Point is also the Central Electricity Generating Board's next choice after Sizewell for a pressurised water reactor.

Somerset, the county most advanced with its monitoring plans, is due to start collecting data in April. Monthly readings of gamma radiation will be taken at 60 points around the county — one for each five-mile square. The monitors will also do an on-the-spot reading with a geiger counter. The results will be interpreted and collated by a newly-appointed radiochemist at specially equipped laboratories in Taunton. Separate checks of tideline debris and seaweed will be made along holiday beaches such as those at Minehead and Burnham-on-Sea.

These readings of general radiation levels will serve two main purposes. They will provide a map of background radiation through the county; this could prove useful in investigating high cancer levels. And they could warn of any sudden upsurge, as was produced by Chernobyl. They can also be compared with the industry's own readings, which are not so wide-ranging. 'There are gaps in the present system which neither the regulatory bodies nor the CEGB fill,' says Somerset county analyst Wilfred Cassidy, whose department is in charge of the monitoring. 'And in any emergency it would be really good value.'

Eventually, Somerset intends to move on to the more sophisticated examination of samples, like soil, plants or animals. This would reveal particular radionuclides, such as caesium or iodine, and allow more direct connection with power stations like Hinkley Point. Avon County Council is now following Somerset's lead, with the other counties joining in once these two authorities have established laboratory support.

Originally suggested by anti-nuclear campaigners concerned at leukaemia cases along the Severn Estuary, the monitoring scheme is just one sign of shifting opinion in the South West. In the past year, both Avon and Somerset have adopted policies which include firm opposition to a PWR at Hinkley Point. Somerset has also just completed a critical overhaul of the plans for an emergency at the power station, including a

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decision to issue information about precautions for the first time to people who live nearby. Alongside the recent poor record of breakdowns and leaks at Hinkley Point, such openness can hardly be expected to increase public confidence.

Crispin Aubrey

Our free press

THANK GOODNESS we have a free press. Three weeks ago the right-wing Tory MP George Gardiner wrote the main leader-page feature in the *Sunday Express*. It was headlined, 'Have you ever wondered what Neil Kinnock's first 100 days would be like?'

Gardiner's reply was less than flattering. He predicted that the TUC would force 'last minute alterations' into the Queens Speech to give it control over state industries; that Heathrow would be overrun by illegal immigrants; that NATO's defence structure would crumble; and that 'as a first step' income tax would rise to 35p in the £. (Gardiner reckons that Labour is really angling for a rate of 53p, but that 'Chancellor Hattersley will welsh on many of his pledges' to keep the rate down.)

Sir Sigmund Sternberg decided to respond to Gardiner. Sir Sigmund is a successful businessman, Labour Party member and deputy chairman of the Labour Finance and Industry Group. He wrote a 300-word letter correcting some of Gardiner's worst inaccuracies regarding Labour's policy. It is not surprising, or even particularly noteworthy, that the *Sunday Express* chose not to publish it. What is curious is what happened next.

Sir Sigmund, being wealthy enough to take the matter a stage further, offered to pay for his letter to appear in the *Sunday Express* as an advertisement. On Tuesday 27 January, Max Davidson, the paper's features editor, told Sir Sigmund that the ad would indeed appear. The following Sunday, 1 February came — and went, without its appearance. Sir Sigmund sent a further missive: what had gone wrong? Eventually Davidson responded as follows:

'Dear Sir Sigmund, Thank you for your letter. I am as surprised as you are that your letter in response to George Gardener's *[sic]* article was not published. I am afraid, however, that I have now been informed by my superiors that the *Sunday Express* will not now be publishing your letter either in editorial or advertising space. My apologies for falsely raising your hopes. With best wishes . . .'

Thank goodness we have a free press.

Peter Kellner

If the caption fits

No 5

It's time for a real test of your ingenuity. Captions or bubbles for the above picture have to reach us by Tuesday 24 February. The best one, winning a £10 book token, will be published in the issue of 27 February, the very day that the Greenwich by-election result becomes known. Deirdre Wood, the People's candidate, is the one on the right.

No 3: winner

Duncan Campbell to Special Branch officer: 'Well, it means just what it says — two pints please' *(Ken Rudge, Richmond, Surrey).*

Getting it taped

DESPITE REPORTS that the Special Branch are closing in on moles up and down Britain, video industry sources say that the Branch — 10 days after their raid on the BBC — still haven't assembled the video equipment necessary to examine the videotapes of the *Secret Society* series taken from BBC Scotland in Glasgow.

On Monday this week, a Special Branch team visited Milton Keynes, hoping to obtain viewing and copying equipment from a small video services company, Total Vision. They swore local staff to secrecy. According to managing director Ken Best, 'We've been asked by the Metropolitan Police not to say anything about this'. But one police officer was so flummoxed by the different video standards used that he had to ring from Milton Keynes to the BBC Engineering Department for advice — thus blowing open the Branch's plans to make secret copies.

In order to copy the *Secret Society* tapes, the Branch are understood to have hired more video equipment from another video company, Viewplan of Wapping. Meanwhile, the exact location of all the seized tapes is a matter of uncertainty. Earlier this week, Strathclyde Police reassured BBC Scotland that none of their tapes had left Glasgow.

Among specialised video equipment the police have sought are pulse generators, dubbing leads, and U-Matic video recorders. This equipment would only be used to make their own copies. A BBC Scotland spokesperson said that Strathclyde Police would once more be asked to 'clarify' where the tapes had gone. ●

Bearish bookies

LABOUR is less fancied by betting persons for the General Election Steeplechase than at any time since December 1985, the depths of the miners strike. In the last month, Labour has dropped two points and the Tories have picked up two in our opinion poll based on bookmakers' odds.

Tick-Tack Index

	Dec 85	Mar 86	Jun 86	Sept 86	Dec 86	NOW
Con	55	49	43	49	57	65
Lab	33	41	49	44	40	33
Lib/SDP	11	10	8	7	3	2

The bookies are remarkably unanimous, all quoting the Tories at 2-5 on, Labour 7-4 and the Liberal/SDP Alliance at 50-1 to win most seats in the general election (except William Hill, who have moved the Alliance back to 33-1). The weight of gamblers' money is, surprisingly, more optimistic about Labour's chances than the gloomy general public, only 21 per cent of whom think Labour will win, excluding the don't knows in Harris' TV-am poll last week. Seventy-seven per cent think the Tories will win — twice as many as intend to vote Conservative; only 2 per cent plump for the Alliance.

Last month we reported June and November as William Hill's favourite months for the date of the election. Ladbroke now offer betting by quarters: 2nd quarter 1987 is odds-on favourite, followed by 4th quarter 1987 at 7-4 and 2nd quarter 1988, that is, the bit of the quarter before 9 June, at 7-2. No bookie is — yet — offering odds on dates after that.

John Rentoul

Harry Challands

The *New Statesman* lost one of its most devoted readers last week, with, the death of Councillor Harry Challands, chair of the Housing Committee of Chesterfield Council. Harry was not one of those socialists who measured his worth in mayoral chains or badges on the lapel. He did the jobs that need doing in local government, as thousands like him do, fairly and well, and always without posturing. He had subscribed to every single issue of the *New Statesman* since 1939, and had it mailed after him wherever he went on active service in the war. There were many times he disagreed with it, but he always wanted to keep up with the debate. We need more readers like him, able to fuse argument and action. The Labour Party needs more activists like him; his personal example is the best hope that it will get them.

Phillip Whitehead

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PETER KELLNER

Tactical voting: the wrong answer to the wrong question

IN THE ANNALS of electoral history, the ward of Hampton Nursery in Richmond deserves a special place. In May 1982, the Tories lost their overall majority on the borough council. They tied with the Liberal/SDP Alliance, 26 seats each. The Alliance managed to draw level by winning a seat in Hampton Nursery by a single vote. A Tory had won first place comfortably: in the fight for the ward's second seat, the Liberal, Rodney Hopkins, won 839 votes, while the Conservative, Joan Keogan, won 838.

For those of us who like to think that a single vote can make a difference, the tale of Hampton Nursery is heart-warming. Had the Liberal just lost the seat, the Tories would have retained their majority on the borough council. The point may be extended. Suppose a handful of people who normally support Labour decided to vote tactically for Mr Hopkins. At the margin it was their votes that eliminated majority Tory rule in Richmond.

On a far larger scale, Hampton Nursery provides the model for the tactical voting campaign, TV 87, launched this week. The campaign's overriding object is to 'advise voters to vote tactically in those constituencies where such voting could achieve the defeat of candidates who would support the continuation of present Conservative policies'. In theory, it would take only a modest number of Labour supporters in Hampton Nursery-type constituencies to separate Tory MPs from their seats.

There is, however, a logical problem. It can be shown that in Hampton Nursery each vote mattered. But in thousands of other places it did not. Wherever a winning candidate's majority is more than one, which is almost everywhere almost all of the time, the decision of a single voter to vote tactically (or to vote at all) makes no difference to the outcome. I have voted in every local and national election that I have been entitled to participate in, and I intend to continue to do so. But I shall be astonished if my one vote ever determines who wins the ward or constituency where I vote.

That is the case even though I live in a marginal constituency, which Labour has to win if it is to form a government. Even if we assume that the local result is close — say, within 2,000 votes either way — the odds that my single vote will decide who wins and who loses are 4,000 to one.

In safe seats the odds are non-existent. Yet at general elections the turnout is almost as high in safe seats as marginal ones. If a significant number of electors were to decide whether, and if so how, to vote on the basis of a calculation about whether their action will affect the outcome, far fewer people would vote in safe seats than in marginals.

Thankfully for the health of British democracy, most people do vote. When inaccuracies in the electoral register are taken into account — people who move away from the area, or die, or are wrongly left on the register after they have changed address — about four out of five people make the journey to the polling station.

This cannot be explained in purely functional terms. The size of the turnout demonstrates that voting has a deeper significance. It is to do with things like hope, pride, loyalty, anger, civic duty and party identification. Which of these motivations matter, and in which proportions, varies from voter to voter. But from the observed behaviour of millions of our fellow citizens, it is very little to do with calculations about the effects of a single vote.

IF TV 87 is to succeed, it must respond to a central logical weakness in its case. The argument for a Labour supporter voting tactically for the Alliance rests on the proposition that the functional importance of his or her vote outweighs the virtues of sticking with the Labour candidate. Even if we take as given that in some places the Alliance candidate might beat the Tory while the Labour candidate will not, that is not sufficient reason in itself for any particular Labour supporter to vote Alliance.

> ***'The odds that my single vote will decide who wins and who loses are 4,000 to one'***

In almost all circumstances the result will be to decrease the Tory majority, or increase the Alliance majority, by one. The smallest majority in any Parliamentary election in the last 100 years was 2. (The beneficiary was the National Labour candidate in Ilkeston in 1931.) At no parliamentary election has any voter now living affected the result of the election by his or her single vote.

There is an answer to this point. It is that the TV 87 campaign is concerned with influencing mass behaviour, not just single votes. If a few thousand people in the relevant constituencies vote tactically, then the combined impact of their votes will be to unseat more Tories than would otherwise be defeated.

The arithmetic is unassailable, but the logic underlying it is ropey. It assumes that there is cause and effect among voters in the choice they make. According to this argument a single voter becomes the lever for others. If A votes tactically, this will encourage B, C and D to vote tactically. But what if A, the crafty beggar, decides in the privacy of the polling booth *not* to vote tactically? B, C and D have then made their judgements on a false assumption.

It is not A's choice that has influenced their vote, but something rather different: *their assumption* about A's choice. Tactical voting is not unlike an outbreak of mass hysteria at a fringe religious meeting: it is not so much the intrinsic value of the act that propels people to rush up to the preacher as the fact that everyone else seems to be doing it.

That does not mean that tactical voting won't happen, or that it is necessarily wrong or irrational when it does. It may well happen, and it could well damage the Tories. The point, rather, is that tactical voting is a capricious and potentially dangerous weapon. It is not healthy in a mass democracy to invite people cynically to desert their preferred party; and it only makes matters worse to encourage such cynicism with the argument that many others will behave likewise.

THERE IS, however, an alternative kind of campaign which would make more sense and would avoid the charge of cynically manipulating democracy's most sacred rituals. The campaign would be directed at people who are anti-Tory but not strongly for either of the opposition groups. The difference is that these negative voters do not have to be weaned off Labour or the Alliance: they are not tactical voters being encouraged to desert their first choice, for they have no clear first choice. They simply want to see the Tories out of government.

Here TV 87 could have a role. It would need to dispense with its high-falutin guff about wanting a 'more "One Nation" government . . . more responsive to the needs of the unemployed and the disadvantaged'. That kind of nonsense creates a wholly bogus impression that TV 87 has a positive purpose. Instead its aim is specifically negative: to boot Mrs Thatcher out of Number Ten. That is certainly a worthwhile objective, but as a political philosophy it is somewhat incomplete.

TV 87 should address itself specifically to the rootless anti-Thatcher vote, and offer this message: 'You want that bloody woman out? So do we. You don't mind so much what kind of government replaces her? Fair enough, we're not too fussed ourselves, though you ought to listen to what each of the parties says before committing yourself to such a negative stance. If, after that, you still put the defeat of the Tories above all other considerations, here is a list that tells you which party has the best chance of beating the Tories in each seat'.

Such a list would provide many voters with valuable information. Unfortunately, this week's offering from TV 87 is seriously flawed. It includes on its list of Alliance target seats a number where Labour would probably be running second to the Tories if an opinion poll were conducted today. They are: Bedfordshire North, Exeter, Harrow East, Hertfordshire West, Leeds North-West, Littleborough & Saddleworth, Milton Keynes, Plymouth Drake, Shipley and Wansdyke.

In each of those seats the Alliance's lead over Labour was less than 10 points in 1983. In none of them has the Alliance established itself as the natural challenger to the Tories. Not the least of the dangers of the TV 87 campaign to Labour *in those seats* is that Labour might *become* established as the third-place party — and that would diminish Labour's hopes of ever forming a majority government again. □

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The constitutional nettle no one will touch

The very uncertainties and* angsts *with which Charles, crown prince of Britain, appears — intelligently — to regard his role could paradoxically offer this country's best hope of withdrawing from the thraldom of royalty, argue

JOHN LLOYD & JOHN RENTOUL

Rex Features

'Stop the image-making, I want to get off . . .'

WE HAVE a succession crisis in the making. The crown prince, Charles, is a man with too much sensitivity and intelligence — to say nothing of his eccentricities — to take for granted the huge pretence that the plutocratic monarchist carbuncle on the face of the nation should have a socially useful or even acceptable role in a modern democracy which faces sharp divisions in the years ahead.

His younger brother, Andrew, is a big daft lad with a big cheery wife who *has* such assurance (and would be preferred as future king by some of the aristocratic monarchists who surround the House of Windsor), but is now well out of the line of succession. And Edward, the reluctant marine, has yet to find a role or lose the arrogance which made him a covert target for revenge on the Cambridge rugger fields and on the marines' training grounds. Princess Anne, trapped inside a strained marriage, has recouped some kudos through good works (for Save the Children) but is now faced with an approaching middle age offering little but being a surrogate for her mother, seeing age's erosion in her equestrian skills and waiting for the press to ambush her with further allegations of affairs.

At the core of the impending crisis is the Charles and Diana marriage. The two are utterly dissimilar in their attitudes, habits and intellects. Charles has something of the scholar's delight in study: but his royal duties make it impossible for him to be more than a voyeur, so it has become fragmented into eclectic interest in fields such as community architecture and parapsychology, where gurus like architect Rod Hackney and anthropologist Laurens Van Der Post act as his guides.

His shyness appears genuine — he made few friends outside the aristocratic circle at Cambridge — yet so does a certain debilitating social guilt. 'So much talent wasted', he said while meeting the unemployed during a visit to the north east a year ago: echoes of the Prince of Wales's (Edward VIII-to-briefly-be) remark in 1936 that 'something must be done'. But the fact that *he* can do nothing now or in the future leaves the good-hearted sentiment hanging limply in the media air.

Diana, married at 20 into a maelstrom of hyperactive gawking from the world's lenses, is self-deprecatingly 'thick as a plank' with 'a brain the size of a pea' (her own — attributed — comments). The gulf that separates her from her own real desires, emotions, resentments and anxieties can barely be imagined. Like a victim of Hitchcock's birds, the gobbling aggression which surrounded her first reduced her to tears, and now seems to be breeding an incipient defiance, a retreat into a self-defined royal twittishness with a contempt for matters of importance — including those which torment her husband. Having quickly produced two sons, *her* natural inclinations may soon, after the seventh year of her marriage next year, lead her to batter against the straight lines inexorably laid down for her, with every opportunity offered to the outer ring of her jailers — the media — to mete out punishment for transgression.

The media are, of course, also at the core of the problem (see Peter McKay, p10); or rather the problem is their relationship to the high-wire act which is the British monarchy. For the crown prince's family has not, any more than the royal family, chosen the relatively demotic position of the Danes; instead, the Wales's income (£1 million a year from the Duchy of Cornwall), their homes (Kensington Palace, Highgrove, Glos., Tamarisk in the Scilly Isles), and their circle (exclusively exclusive) constitute a breathtaking assertion of the right to be royally privileged — cunningly transmuted into the quintessence of the national

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spirit by a reciprocity of homage which reaches its apogee during the queen's occasional visits to the homes of the humble, sanctified by the national libation of a cuppa. It has obvious and huge emotional strength, from which few are wholly immune: but it carries a huge fragility as well.

For the media must devour as well as construct: their relentlessness in securing stories and pictures (James Whitaker of the *Daily Mirror*, an elegant if cynical monarchist, crawled through undergrowth to get pictures of a five-month pregnant Diana in her bikini) emphasises the tycoon-like nature of the royal family at the expense of their ceremonial role. With three separate royal households circling round the dynastic mansion — to say nothing of Edward, Princess Margaret, the Kents and the Gloucesters — the prospect for a domino-chain of scandals, conspicuous consumption, adulteries, divorces (when will the first royal Aids victim be discovered?) and thus of adoration turning to resentment, is clearly present.

THE FRAGILITY of the family's position is further underscored by the extreme narrowness of its social base. It is a commonplace of royal commentary that the royal princes and princess had a 'middle-class' education. Rubbish. They had an eccentric, aristocratic/upper-class education and, even within these confines, were cocooned. The princes went to Gordonstoun in Scotland; founded by German-Jewish refugee Kurt Hahn, Gordonstoun was modelled on the Bavarian school Hahn had founded in the late '20s which emphasised the cultivation of leadership through physical achievement and the emphasis of self-reliance. Hahn, arrested by the Nazis in 1936 then set free after an international outcry, brought these ideas to Gordonstoun; Prince Philip, then an obscure Greek prince, was among his first pupils.

Gordonstoun had two drawbacks, especially for the crown prince: first, it was in itself narrow in intake; second, few of its boys would join the circle of courtiers who now surround Charles.

Royal balanced ticket

Even if he wants to — and Charles at least has shown signs of wanting to — he cannot break free of the constrictions and the nature of his post. His advisers outside his private office — his secretary is Sir John Riddell, a former (wet) Tory candidate and banker with Credit Suisse First Boston; his business adviser is Rupert Fairfax, poached from the aggressively political conglomerate Hanson Trust — are people who seek to address the most obvious distress in our communities: people like Rod Hackney and chief executive of Business in the Community Steven O'Brien. But they cannot be friends, or even colleagues in a common project: he can merely give their work a princely blessing, and pass on before his concern becomes politically controversial.

Moreover, he alone among his generation of royals appears to be plagued by such charitable feelings. The rest do, or try to do, what other rich and talentless people with time on their hands do — lead a life of hedonism mixed with sport. King George VI had two daughters, one of whom has been an undoubted success at her main function: ensuring the survival of the monarchy. The other, Margaret, sullenly or explosively rebelled against the whole charade, while remaining a beneficiary of it. Queen Elizabeth II had three sons and a daughter, one of whom has avoided debilitating scandal but is miserably dreading the constrictions of the throne; and the other three of whom are clearly fissile material.

The queen and Prince Philip have presented a politically 'balanced' ticket. As she admitted through Michael Shea, her press secretary, last year during the *Sunday Times* row, the queen is a one-nation Tory with notional Labour sympathies; Prince Philip plays to the harder right. But what can Diana's counterpoint to Charles' guilty liberalism be?

So Queen Elizabeth plods on through her royal engagements, meeting her people and other people's peoples, hoping her consort does not insult too many of them, doubtful whether her son is shrewd or ruthless enough to preserve what John Pearson (in *The Ultimate Family*) calls 'the supreme achievement of the Royal House of Mountbatten-Windsor, the way it has learned to use the modern media to perpetuate itself'.

But the succession *must* come: and with it, perhaps, the best hope this country will have for the beginnings of a withdrawal from the thraldom of royalty. □

Tribune of the republic

WILLIE HAMILTON, Britain's most famous republican, is 70 this year and retiring from parliament at the next election. Or not retiring, but going down fighting the hopelessly Tory seat of South Hams in the Duchy of Cornwall (Labour lost its deposit with 3,800 votes in 1983). This act of characteristic defiance earns him a bigger pension, as MPs defeated in elections are more generously treated than those who retire.

His views haven't changed. Summoned from his loft where he was mending his burst pipes, he said to the *NS*: 'I want the royal family to retire as soon as they can. I don't think the British people have anything to fear from an elected president.' Has republicanism passed its low point? Can the present level of royal sycophancy be maintained? 'I think it can,' he says gloomily. 'The British people are so bloody deferential. A great majority would support my views about the royal hangers-on, but when it comes to the Queen herself, I'm afraid . . .' There was just a hint of the old apoplexy. 'All this about the marvellous job she does—a million women could do the job just as well. I think building her up like a god is dangerous.'

He cheers up at the thought of fighting an election in Prince Charles' fiefdom, in a constituency that used to be called Totnes. 'It's very feudal and very Tory,' he says with relish. 'I think it's going to be a hung parliament. And it might be heresy for me to say it, but I think that's a good thing. The British people are fed up with the loony left and the loony right.' But surely that would put power in the hands of the Queen? 'Yes, I've said before that if the Queen were in a position where she had to choose, all these constitutional experts and advisers are very right-wing. I would like to see a minority Labour government. The great hope must be getting the Alliance up to 25 per cent or so.'

He's writing a second book which he hopes to get out before the election. (He still gets letters from people trying to get hold of *My Queen and I*, 1975, out of print.) In it, he compares his upbringing—son of militant miner, Puddock Stile elementary, Newbottle, Co Durham, Washington Grammar, Sheffield University—with that of Prince Charles. 'Everything I did wrong was entirely my own fault,' he said. 'Whatever Prince Charles did he was on the public payroll for life.'

The story that his second wife, Margaret Cogle whom he married in 1982, is a committed supporter of the royal family appears not to be true. 'She thinks you can't do anything about the monarchy—it's like the weather,' he explains. As a tribute to 61 years of republicanism, we call on the voters of South Hams *not* to vote tactically in the general election, but to vote for an exceptional third-placed Labour candidate. But to whom will the mantle of republicanism pass in the new parliament?

John Rentoul

Sit. vac . . . a supreme court

NEAL ASCHERSON ***can live with the notion of a presidential style monarch, but not with the 'absolute, divine right to power' of the House of Commons***

MY FIRST CLOSE look at monarchy came when I was about 14. King George VI and Queen Elizabeth were attending an Anglican service, two small, gaudy, doll-like figures glittering in the dark recess of their pews. The King, I suppose already in poor health, was wearing rather crude make-up. This bewildered me. I could make no connection either to the kings of English history — saints, villains, gluttons, heroes, but always in my imagination vigorous — or to the nice, shy man in naval uniform shown on newsreels picking his way across the bomb-rubble of London.

These two little painted mommets, in contrast, seemed helpless. It was almost a surprise to see that they could walk from their seats on their own feet, and did not require to be lifted. This mascot-like aspect of royalty is, I admit, no less deceptive than that of history-book warriors or — even — of that officer in the ruins. But it was the image that stuck with me. Unable to perceive the Hanoverian monarchy as a threat, I have never seen the abolition of monarchy as a necessary condition for radical change in British society and structures. Retention of the monarchy, in fact, might turn out to be a condition for such change.

Many socialists and republicans will entirely reject this. They hold worship of the monarchy — even after its *aggiornamento* through the admission of television to present that misleading picture of 'ordinary folk at home' — to be the seal which sanctifies and clips together the whole anachronistic bundle of British traditional institutions. They are surely right to say that the nature of the British state is monarchical:

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secretive, paternalist, arbitrary in an almost personal way, ruled by a Parliament which itself claims absolute power. But to identify our institutions as those of a modified *ancien régime* does not imply that they can only be replaced by deposing the Rex or Regina. We have managed to live with this family for another 200 years since 1789, and we are the wiser for that.

The force of early republicanism was the imperative of Reason. Superstition killed: Reason set free. In this light, hereditary monarchy was the primary target because of its inherent absurdity: kings, according to Tom Paine, were paid 'eight hundred thousand sterling a year and worshipped into the bargain' for doing nothing more than make war and dish out places. But in the late 20th century, we have good grounds to think that strict rationality is not the only guide to attaining liberty, equality and fraternity.

Britain requires a Republic, but whether it is headed by a president or — as in Belgium — by a King seems to me a thing indifferent. The point is that our monarchy does not consist only of the Queen, even when she is grouped with her husband and the puzzling figure of the Successor — that new Hamlet who wanders the battlements wrestling with who knows what Jungian dreams and fears. Today, the British monarchy is the compound of Crown-in-Parliament. And it is there, in the House of Commons, that we find the same unlimited, absolute divine right to power which used to sit in one individual. That is our modern 'absurdity'.

MUCH IS SAID about the price paid by Britain for its priority in the Industrial Revolution — we made all the mistakes, teaching others coming later how to avoid them. Far less is said about Britain's — properly, England's — priority in political revolution. Seventeenth-century England produced the first modern revolution in Europe, and thinkers whose ideas on contract were to guide the first republicans a hundred years later in France and America.

But the settlement which finally issued from those struggles, after 1688, was in many ways archaic. Absolutism was not abolished. Instead, it was merely transferred from the crown alone to the crown controlled by Parliament. The doctrine of Parliamentary sovereignty (or absolutism), under which we still live, allows for no constitution. That would amount to popular sovereignty, the placing of Parliament in subordination to another, yet higher authority.

If Parliament, to put it crudely, has become the 'monarchy', then it is nonsense to pretend that we have a constitutional monarchy simply because, 300 years ago, Parliament established control over some actions of the Crown. Shielded by this historical sham, the British state in our time acquires more and more power over the subject, whose ability to resist the state through the traditional channels of his or her MP or through the courts becomes less and less.

A Bill of Rights on its own would achieve little. We need a Republican constitution, a written document justiciable by a supreme court which Parliament would be obliged to obey. Under such a constitution, power could be at last decentralised: vertically down through society and horizontally to the nations and regions of the United Kingdom. Federalism would become possible: at present, Parliament can only loan authority to a local sub-parliament, keeping the right to revoke it at any moment (as Enoch Powell said ten years ago, 'power devolved is power retained').

We could institute a 'continental' system of administrative law, a pyramid of courts designed to judge the legality of executive decisions at every level to replace the inadequate patchwork of tribunals and ombudsmen which exists at present. With this would go a radical re-casting of all central institutions, not only constitutional guarantees of free speech and freedom of information, but a modern proportional electoral law and a reform of the working of Parliament itself.

IT IS PAINFUL that Labour is so slow to recognise the importance of this constitutional revolution in the name of liberty. My own belief is that democratic socialism can only develop the ground of modern democratic institutions. The arena of *ancien régime*, in which we live, is designed to ensure the victory of reaction — outside or inside the Labour Party.

Meanwhile, the impulse towards liberty and equality perishes under the weight of gimcrack pageantry and police batons. The most marvellous virtue of Republicanism is its healthy contempt for mere 'heritage', and its insistence that we, the living, have the right to make institutions to suit ourselves. As Paine wrote, 'the vanity and presumption of governing beyond the grave is the most ridiculous and insolent of all tyrannies. Man has no property in man; neither has any generation a property in the generations which are to follow.' □

The Gordonstoun folly

IN EFFECT the Royal Family moved down market when Prince Philip insisted on sending his sons to Gordonstoun, the austere, German-inspired public school in frosty Morayshire.

Whatever its egalitarian virtues, Gordonstoun seems an odd place to send the first royal princes to be educated with other children in schools. The Queen Mother is known to have argued in favour of Eton, and cleared the way with 'Slough Grammar' authorities in the event of Prince Philip changing his mind at the eleventh hour. But Charles was packed off to Morayshire, and he hated it.

He was shy, introverted and 'arty', never fitted in with the other boys. Boys were wary of offering friendship to him on pain of being accused of sycophancy. Dugald Mackenzie, now a carpet company director and then Gordonstoun's head boy, said two years ago, 'Everyone was very wary of Charles because of who he was. He never really had any close friends.' The overwhelming advantage of the English public school system is the venerated old-pal network it creates and nourishes. It works as well in Big Bang Britain as it did 50 and 100 years ago. An Old Etonian newspaper executive who has studied the Royal Family for 20 years says Gordonstoun was the downfall of all three royal princes.

'They have no real friends. Boys at schools like Gordonstoun don't know how to handle members of the Royal Family. At Eton, Charles would have been accepted on equal terms. In a way, Gordonstoun reinforced the other-worldliness that membership of the Royal Family entails. Also, children of families known to the Queen would have been at Eton or other leading English public schools. Charles might not have found it so hard to find a wife if he had been introduced through school friends to the circle of girls who were suitable.'

Sending his sons to Gordonstoun is seen by some members of the upper classes as Prince Philip's V-sign to a society which for a long time found himself and the uncle who pushed his cause, Lord Mountbatten, comic figures.

A Scottish aristocrat says: 'Philip's not British. I know that's an obvious thing to say but it is rarely appreciated. He didn't have an Eton and Harrow background and couldn't see the point of it. There's no doubt Charles was miserable there. He was also wretchedly unhappy when they later sent him to Australia.

'But it all fitted in with Philip's idea of toughening him up — that's the rather unfortunate Germanic side of his character showing up. The boy was interested in music, and he absolutely squashed that.'

Peter McKay

HM's rat pack

The Fourth Estate is a senile corgi when it comes to acting as a constitutional check.* PETER McKAY *on the professional royal-watchers

THE PRINCE OF WALES has told author Penny Junor, in the course of a 90 minute interview, that he is feeling rather depressed. According to Ms Junor, who is working on a new biography called *Charles*, 'he has reached the middle years of his life when all his contemporaries are at the tops of their professions. And then he reads in the papers that people think he spends his time talking to plants.'

At the same time, there are new reports of staff problems in the Prince of Wales's household. The Deputy private secretary, Humphrey Mews, is said to be unhappy in his job, and the atmosphere is described as 'very tense'. Mews's predecessor, David Roycroft, resigned. In the five years since the marriage of the Prince and Princess of Wales there have been close to thirty defections from his personal staff. The most important was the departure of Edward Adeane, 47, who as private secretary was expected to stay in the job until retirement — as his father, Martin Adeane, had done as private secretary to the Queen.

A palace official told the gossip columnist Nigel Dempster: 'Since Adeane left, the prince has been

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without anyone telling him what he should do. So he now does exactly what he wants to do and the feeling is he should not be left to make these decisions himself, because duty has inevitably suffered.' The Prince of Wales is in the doldrums. Prince Edward quit the marines and wants to become an actor. Prince Philip insults the Chinese and Princess Anne tells a photographer to 'fuck off'. Is the House of Windsor cracking up?

Better than snooker

It is trite to compare the coverage of the royal family to that of television soap operas. Yet the life of the Windsors is increasingly and almost overwhelmingly the favourite topic of debate in our popular newspapers. No mass enthusiasm such as soccer or snooker can compete. Is the presentation as entertainment of the royals by press and television now the only reason for their existence? And, if it is, is the presentation accurate?

Gone are the days when officials at Buckingham Palace told inquiring reporters to mind their own business. The Press Secretary is arguably a more important royal functionary now than the Queen's private secretary. Michael Shea's role is not confined to putting out press releases about royal peregrinations. Nor is it merely to deny stories about the family. Mr Shea, a former Foreign Office official, is now empowered to express publicly his shock and distaste at any story which reflects badly on his employers — or indeed to convey his pleasure when a visit or other royal activity has been deemed successful.

It was Mr Shea who, in 1981, assembled Fleet Street editors at Buckingham Palace and told them of the Queen's concern for the Princess of Wales. Diana, it was said, was finding it difficult to adjust to the transition from unknown daughter of an obscure aristocrat to minutely-examined, frequently-photographed royal consort. The press's reticence in discussing her problems — one of which was anorexia — would be appreciated. Only one editor decided to decline Mr Shea's invitation to the palace — Kelvin MacKenzie of the *Sun*. This was most significant in determining the future relationship between Fleet Street and the palace.

There is a formal, daily relationship between palace officials and the press. The details of royal visits are sent out, as are the coverage arrangements. Photographers are told exactly where they may stand, and Mr Shea and his officials are keen to provide the best possible access. (It was this enthusiastic support of the press's camera positions that led the Press Secretary into his embarrassing, televised scuffle with Chinese officials last year.)

There is also an informal relationship between palace officials and those members of the press who regularly cover royal events. Apart from any other consideration, it makes sense from a security point of view for members of the regular royal press corps to be known — and, indeed, in a limited way, to be part of — the royal court. On foreign tours, the press's baggage carry Buckingham Palace labels. Her Majesty's press — known to its members as The Rat Pack, and to Americans, after a memorable *Washington Post* article, as The Boys On The Bus — are an irreverent, noisy, excitable but essentially loyal crew who, like the royal corgis, are ever on the lookout for interlopers into the royal circle.

If a poll was conducted on the veracity, or otherwise, of stories about the royal family, it would surely conclude that most of them were made up. If, on the other hand, most of the *major* stories were investigated, it is likely that the greatest proportion of them would turn out to be right, or at least on the right lines. From the Abdication crisis of 50 years ago to the Prince Edward fuss earlier this month, the major press stories have generally proved correct.

MOST OF THE inaccurate stories come about because writers starved of facts fall back on pre-conceived ideas about the family's structure, as well as the attitudes of its individual members. Thus early this month the *Sun* ripped into Prince Philip as the uncaring father who would not speak to the 'wimp' son who wanted to quit the Royal Marines. The story conformed happily and acceptably with the public persona of the hard-faced 'Iron Duke'.

Then, the *Sun* — which had broken the original story — landed another scoop. This was the text of a letter from Prince Philip to the Royal Marines' Commandant General Sir Michael Wilkins. This read rather oddly to those who had accepted the idea of the raving, right-wing prince who would no longer speak to his weak-kneed son. '. . . I can't help feeling that the blaze of publicity did not make things any easier for him', wrote Prince Philip in a letter acknowledging that his youngest son now faced 'a very difficult problem of re-adjustment'. Without so much as a blush, the *Sun*, which had earlier called Prince Philip 'a miserable old sod', mused: 'His letter to Sir Michael reveals his (Philip's) largely unseen, caring nature. And it also reveals a father who believes the damage is done and lessons can be learned'. Breath-taking humbug. But all in a day's work at Wapping.

There were stories about the Royal Family prior to the appearance here of Rupert Murdoch. Prince Philip called the *Daily Express* 'a bloody awful newspaper' almost 30 years ago because of its royal coverage. In those days Rupert Murdoch was learning to be a newspaperman by sub-editing on Beaverbrook's *Express*. However, neither Beaverbrook nor the rival Rothermere slipped the dogs on the royals in the way Murdoch has done subsequently.

Murdoch's hands-off approach on questions of editorial judgement in royal stories has arguably boosted circulation far more than the much-vaunted, rather *passé*, Page Three girls. There is an enthusiastic public response to the *Sun* and the *News of the World*'s royal exposures. Rival publishing organisations — even those ever-anxious to aver unwavering loyalty to the crown, such as the *Mirror*, *Express* and *Mail* groups — are obliged to match the Murdoch disclosures.

Last year's discussion over the relationship of the Queen and Mrs Thatcher allowed the heavy papers to get into the act, too. This began in the Murdoch-owned *Sunday Times*, which claimed to have good authority for saying that the Queen disapproved of Mrs Thatcher's hard-nosed Conservatism and, in particular, the Prime Minister's rejection of Commonwealth views on the South Africa question.

The good authority turned out to be Michael Shea, who had discussed the subject with *Sunday Times* reporters. What no one found odd at the time, or subsequently, was the fact of these discussions. Was Mr Shea really empowered to discuss publicly the Queen's views at all? If so, he had more power in this respect than Her Majesty's Prime Minister.

What are they really like? Those who know her say the Queen is wise and thoughtful, has enormous political nous and possesses a very sharp sense of humour. Nothing she has ever said has revealed any of these qualities. Digging a little deeper, some say she is a Tory wet who dislikes confrontational Conservatism — a sort of monarchical Harold Macmillan. Again, there is not the slightest evidence in word or deed that this is so.

What is incontestably true is that it serves the Queen well to be seen thus. The republican strains in Britain, such as they are, are entirely on the left. So no harm is done if the monarchy is seen to favour Labour. We were told the Queen liked Harold Wilson better than Edward Heath. Perhaps she did. Happily her preference was politically advantageous.

So we were also disposed to believe that she was worried about Margaret Thatcher. Mrs Thatcher's own circle believed the stories, which is not to say that the Prime Minister did. I was told by one of her advisers that the monarch always stood on ceremony at the Tuesday meetings, and that Mrs Thatcher had remarked drily: 'Well, dear, that's all they have, isn't it?' □

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MEDIA

Reflections on fighting impossible odds

Brenda Dean

ACCORDING to Rupert Murdoch's *Sunday Times*, Mrs Thatcher is to fight the next general election 'on a new package of trade union reforms giving sweeping powers to rank and file members'. Having spent more than 12 months enmeshed in the ramifications of her last three trade union 'reform' Acts I find it hard to contemplate any further steps she could take — and yet seek to present Britain abroad as a genuine democracy.

After all it was not so long ago that Mrs Thatcher was protesting to the Polish authorities that Lech Walesa and his Solidarity colleagues were not allowed to demonstrate nor represent the people who had chosen them as their negotiators.

Only a few weeks ago incidentally I declined to give an interview to Polish TV because one could see Wapping was going to be used against Solidarity and I was not going to assist the process.

But now that the executive of SOGAT has voted — albeit with the very greatest reluctance — to call a halt to Wapping my thoughts are many and varied. By far my strongest impression is of the total unfairness and the loading of the present industrial relations laws against ordinary working people. And that not for the first time in our history the courts of this land are not the place for them to seek justice.

Wapping took the headlines, but the same laws have been used just as effectively against other workers in struggle, including the bedding workers in the Silentnight dispute. These laws must be, will be, changed. For example, what justice can there be in a law which can sweep a trade union into an *ex-parte* injuction hearing in a judge's home on a Sunday morning — one at which he can give an immediate ruling?

A trade union today has no right whatsover to do the same to an employer. It can only seek 'due process' — in other words join a two-year queue to get a civil court hearing.

As I understand it, employers argued that the law was out of balance at the end of the Callaghan government and that the pendulum had swung too far in favour of unions. That may have been their view but I defy any of them today to justify the balance or fairness in this new interpretation of secondary action.

Now, if a union ballots before a so-called primary dispute, it is protected under the Thatcher laws. But the ballot does nothing to protect the individuals who stand to lose everything from the dispute and may be forced to watch quite helplessly when new workers are engaged in their jobs.

My conclusion is that the civil courts are not the place to sort out industrial disputes. Either we give more power to the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service to intervene if one of the parties requests intervention — as used to happen by regulation during and after World War II — or we should be seeking to develop a system of Labour Courts in which both unions and employers would have rights. And responsibilities.

Looking back, of course, our movement would not touch the suggestion of such a system and a Labour government backed down. Harold Wilson told Hugh Scanlon to get the tanks off his lawn. With hindsight I can say that it was not at all pleasant to have the Thatcher tanks on my lawn either. Nor to look down the barrels of Murdoch's heavy artillery.

A CONCLUSION to be drawn from Wapping is that ballots are not and cannot be used as the cure-all of labour relations problems. We had four ballots in the Wapping dispute. One to decide to go on strike — when Murdoch had set it up so that we had no other option — and twice when those on strike voted quite decisively to reject settlements on offer. The fourth was to seek membership endorsement of a levy to try to rebuild our shattered bank balance — and when the members indicated that they felt the time had run out on Wapping.

We would have liked another. We would have liked the democratic right to ballot those on strike to call off the dispute. *But the law made that impossible*. We were given only 24 hours or be taken back to court for final sequestration and there was no way we could organise a true ballot in that scramble outside the court room.

Sequestration: even now the word sounds dictatorial. Hardly a democratic ring about it.

Even less democratic was our discovery that it was not the court officers who were appointed to take over SOGAT. We met no bailiff to delve into our accounts and our files but rather 'commissioners' — accountants appointed by Murdoch. His lawyers named them and the costs of sequestration came to nearly half a million pounds.

> ***'Harold Wilson told Hugh Scanlon to get the tanks off his lawn. With hindsight I can say it was not at all pleasant to have Thatcher's tanks on my lawn either'***

It could be argued that Wapping, after the miners' dispute, has shown that major public demonstrations do little other than provide television footage to be used over and over again to discomfit trade unions. Certainly every time the lights went up, so did the violence.

But if you deprive working people of every other form of protest, if you make it impossible to seek redress in the courts, and there is no way to compel an employer to come to the negotiating table, surely they have to have some way of making their feelings known? Has not history shown that if people are repressed the ultimate explosion can often wreak a terrible vengeance?

IN THE WHOLE dispute I only had one short interview with a government minister. Giles Shaw of the Home Office saw me at my request about the tactics the police used in the 3 May demonstration.

At no time did I see a minister from the Employment Department formally or informally on what was by common consent a fairly major industrial dispute. Kenneth Clarke did concede a backhanded compliment about the effectiveness with which we were mounting our case but he was pretty swiftly slapped down by 10 Downing Street. Lord Young, of course, just sneered. More typically, Norman Tebbit went into Wapping during the dispute.

Incidentally we are still waiting to put our case to an independent enquiry. One can only come to the conclusion that the government saw electoral advantage in the Wapping situation. In that case they may feel cheated that it is over a little too soon for them. Yet surely if a government is genuinely concerned about the crime wave in inner cities and the waste of police resources there was a good enough reason for some government attempt to force the two sides together.

If Wapping suited the Tories did it damage Labour? I can honestly say that at no time was I put under any pressure by Neil Kinnock or any of his colleagues to withdraw from the dispute in the electoral interests of the party. We got on with Wapping and they did their best for us at Westminster. We could not really ask for more.

As for the TUC, it is easy to criticise but it was the *only* body that offered us help and advice and tried to help. And it stayed in with us to the bitter end. But there surely has to be deep reflection on the TUC role and its constitution. No one would wish to see a fragmented movement as in some Continental countries. Yet surely the movement will soon have to decide whether it truly values unity above principle.

As for the media, overall I believe we had a reasonable deal from the serious newspapers, from radio and most television reporters. Not all. The angling, bias and the distortion of the tabloids was as usual disgraceful. Yet the true purchasing power of our people to deal with it simply by refusing to buy the rubbish was never deployed.

Incidentally the news management technique of the Metropolitan Police was quite something to behold. The speed with which it could assemble a Sunday press conference, produce such carefully-collected missiles and somehow always suffered more injuries in a relationship of three to one (despite their protective padding) was impressive.

Summing up, Wapping was an experience none of us in SOGAT wanted nor wants to through again. We *tried* to negotiate sensibly and constructively but remember: nowhere in Mrs Thatcher's industrial relations 'reforms' is there a compulsion on employers to reciprocate. That is an indictment that should go down in the history books when the lesson of this collection of industrial relations 'reforms' are listed.

We all had our low moments and there were some highs too. For me, both came during our biennial delegate conference at Scarborough in June. The sheer love of our members for that inanimate object called SOGAT '82 came through from the floor to us on the platform. I would swear I could touch it. We all felt the same and that sustained us through some very dark moments during the bleakest year in our union's 200-year history — the longest in the movement. □

Brenda Dean is General Secretary of print union SOGAT.

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Any moment now the *Post* may print 'they *knew*'

The cat's out of the bag, in the form of a memo dated 29 July 1986. No President, argues* CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS, *can get away with claiming that he knew less than his Vice President

Washington

LAST JULY, I followed Vice President George Bush around Jerusalem for a few dispiriting days. The general view among the Israeli scribes was that his visit was merely the opening gambit in a campaign for the Republican nomination. This impression was reinforced by the fact that Bush brought along a camera crew specifically accredited to his own political action committee. There was a lacklustre press conference at which the Vice President displayed the awesome panoply of his ignorance about the Middle East, and there was the usual glad-handing at the Knesset. Reporters were reduced to writing about photo-opportunities, and about the minor inconvenience caused by the security men at the King David Hotel.

This just goes to show how blasé the press, including your own correspondent, can be. Because on 29 July, in the Vice Presidential suite of the King David, there took place a meeting between Bush and a top Israeli official named Amiram Nir. The contents of the meeting were minuted by Bush's chief of staff Craig Fuller. The Reagan administration made a spirited effort to keep this minute out of the pages of the Senate Intelligence Committee's interim report on the Contragate scandal, and succeeded in doing so. But the memo is now 'out', as they say, and one can see why the Reaganites wanted it under wraps.

I have never met Mr Nir, but he sounds like a man of unsentimental decision. In one pungent, synoptic paragraph, he demolishes the entire structure of apology and evasion which the White House has striven to erect since the story began. Speaking of Israeli contacts with the Mullahs in Tehran, and the swapping of arms for hostages, he said:

> 'We are dealing with the most radical elements. They can deliver, that's for sure. They were called yesterday and thanked, and today more phone calls. This is good because we've learned they can deliver and the moderates can't.'

The remainder of the memo makes clear that the meeting was cleared with Colonel Oliver North, that arms transfers were discussed and that the United States government knew exactly what it was doing. But those few lines give the final quietus to Ronald Reagan's recent campaign of mendacity. His sole defence, and the sole indulgence granted him by the public, has been the notion of a sensitive bit of bridge-building with Iranian 'moderates'. Now we have it in writing that, as long ago as last July, the deal was made with hard-liners and involved a straight arms trade. (This makes nonsense, incidentally, of Reagan's claim that 'this was not, repeat not' a ransom negotiation.) I also don't see how Reagan's now-traditional excuse — that he was not informed — can be deployed this time. No President can claim to know less than his Vice President does.

> ***'For the sake of these men, death-squad merchants, drug smugglers and unrepentant hirelings of the ancien régime, Reagan and his advisors were prepared to violate the American Constitution'***

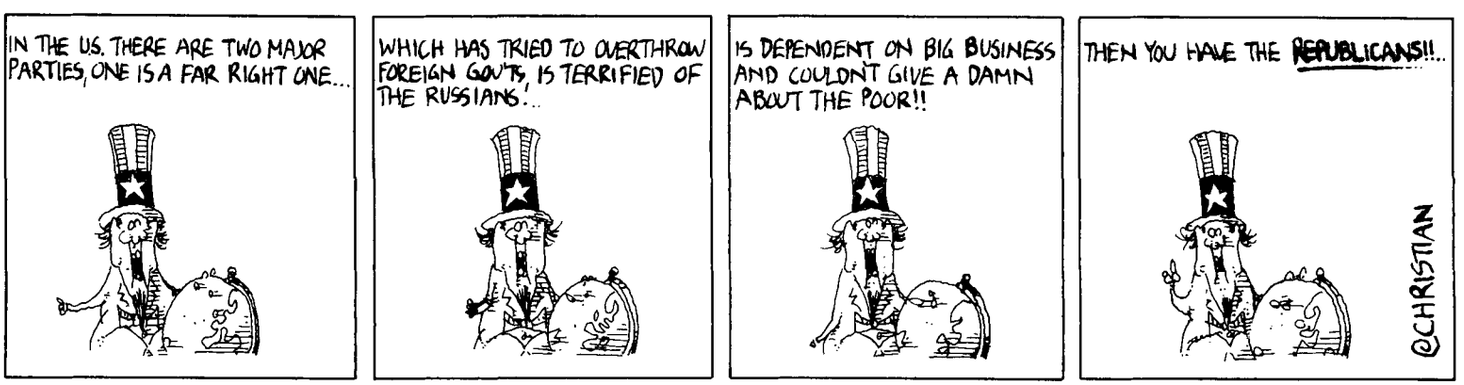
IT'S HARD to test this, because Reagan is hiding from the press at the moment. He is obviously hoping that public indifference will succeed in getting the subject changed. And there are some signs, in the opinion polls, of a slackening of attention. Still, the collapse of the 'moderate Iranian' fantasy is a noteworthy development, coming as it does in the week that more Americans have been snatched off the streets of Beirut.

It was this background that made the State of the Union speech such a flop. Even the usual atmospherics didn't come off. In all previous State of the Union speeches, Reagan has had some 'American heroes' in the gallery of Congress, as props for his peroration. He pointedly skipped that gimmick this year, not because there were no heroes but because it would remind people that the last person he dignified with the title was Oliver North.

The Bush/Nir memo, and the fallout from same, also provide some insight into the other two aspects of the scandal — namely the American relationship with Israel and the American relationship with the Contras. There is a faction within the administration which wants to shift the blame for the Iran fiasco onto Jerusalem. As you can imagine, this faction is opposed by Israel's friends in the conservative establishment. Both sides have been making unbelievable claims — the less-polished Reaganites arguing that an innocent America was taken for a ride by the scheming Israelis and the Israelis meekly saying that they were only trying to be of help. Both groups are lying, as is evidenced by Amiram Nir's own description of Israel's role. According to the memo:

> 'We (Israel) activated the channel. We gave a front to the operation, provided a physical base, provided aircraft.' All this to 'make sure the US will not be involved in logistical aspects.'

That ought to send the cat in a pigeonward direction. As for the Contra connection, we now have a written chronology put together by the White House on 17 November last. The chronology contains a listing of the pluses of the Iran deal, and is headed 'maximum version'. At the end of the list comes an illiterate, handwritten word. The word is 'Nicargua' (*sic*). It is obviously


IN THE US. THERE ARE TWO MAJOR PARTIES, ONE IS A FAR RIGHT ONE...
WHICH HAS TRIED TO OVERTHROW FOREIGN GOVTS, IS TERRIFIED OF THE RUSSIANS...
IS DEPENDENT ON BIG BUSINESS AND COULDN'T GIVE A DAMN ABOUT THE POOR!!
THEN YOU HAVE THE REPUBLICANS!!..
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not going to be long before further memos prove that the Iran arms deal and the Contra arms smuggling are one and the same.

IT'S been a thin week for the Contras altogether. First, a judge in Miami gave permission for two journalists, Tony Avirgan and Martha Honey, to pursue their lawsuit against certain named members of the American foreign policy elite. The suit claims damages for injuries suffered by the pair when a bomb went off at an Eden Pastora press conference. Avirgan and Honey charge that the bomb was placed by Pastora's Contra rivals, armed and trained by the CIA. They also claim that the Contras wanted Pastora out of the way in order to take over the drug-running route on Nicaragua's southern front.

The Contra involvement in the narcotics trade is something that is just waiting to be fully exposed. In a few weeks time, a certain film will appear on a certain network and cause a certain amount of acute, not to say catastrophic, embarrassment.

This news was bad enough for the Contras and their friends and protectors. Worse was the announcement that Arturo Cruz was resigning from the Contra directorate. It had become very clear to poor old Cruz in the last few weeks that he was doomed to lose every argument with the old Somozista hatchetmen who hold all the real power in the exile leadership. His time as a sort of democratic figleaf has not been a happy one. His departure will redden many faces at the State Department and in the offices of the cold-war liberal magazines.

Without Cruz, an ex-Sandinista, they have no case for saying that the Contras are a response to 'the revolution betrayed'. And, since the Contras also knew that Cruz was their only ticket to centrist support, their commitment to an outright counter-revolutionary conservative strategy is thereby demonstrated as extremely strong. It was for the sake of these men, death-squad merchants, drug smugglers and unrepentant hirelings of the *ancien régime*, that Reagan and his advisors were prepared to violate the American Constitution.

Public bafflement is not the same as public indifference, and the White House will be making a mistake if it tries to sit the whole thing out. I am reminded of the old controversy about whether or not there was 'collusion' over Suez. It may not be long before the *Washington Post* can throw caution to the winds and start its front page with that famous *Tribune* headline of 1956: '*They knew*'. □

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THE JOURNALIST'S STORY

How Zircon was launched

The government has handed back material from the five* Secret Society *films seized from BBC Scotland in January. The Special Branch are now settling down to a long investigation of how the BBC-2 Zircon programme was made. In the interests of speed and national security,* DUNCAN CAMPBELL *offers a handy chronology

IN THE HEAT and fury of the last ten days, the air in the Westminster lobbies has been heavy with talk of treason, treachery and soon-to-be-brought charges against Duncan Campbell and his 'moles' under Section One of the Official Secrets Act — the espionage law, not merely the discredited anti-leaking law, Section Two. From just a few hours before the House of Commons emergency debate on the Special Branch raid in Glasgow, rumours have regularly been smeared around lobbyists and onto front pages, predicting a round-up of 'moles', and commensurate legal vengeance on the *New Statesman*.

But nothing has happened. Even senior Special Branch officers — whose honest labour of investigation could never have hoped to keep pace with the breathless drama of last week's front pages — quickly described the rumour campaign as 'malicious, unfounded and ridiculous'. After-the-fact 'security investigations' are of course a well-known circus ritual of British government, whose terms are fully understood by all participants in the great Zircon mole-hunt. Teams of police officers and security investigators have to be seen daily in frenzied activity, while ministers speak (or more usually, leak unattributably) about imminent arrest and punishment.

The Zircon affair has brought to this familiar field new levels of hyperbole. Yet it displays a tardiness of interest or enquiry by the Defence Ministry well beyond that so far castigated by the Leader of the Opposition. Zircon has been described as the 'biggest secret for decades'. The type of police enquiry it triggered is unprecedented in centuries, let alone decades. But for at least two years, up to October 1986, no one in government paid the slightest attention to progressive leaks of information about Zircon.

1984

Details of construction work on a classified new British military satellite were first published in the space industry newsletter *Interspace* on 4 October 1984. The magazine has about 600 subscribers, including staff at GCHQ itself, the Ministry of Defence, and many defence contractors. Most of its sales, however, go abroad. One regular subscriber is the *Intersputnik* satellite organisation — in Moscow, USSR.

1985

By the time the Ministry of Defence decided to take notice of these leaks it was 22 February 1985, and *Interspace* had published its fourth article on the so-called 'Schhh-Sat'. Assuming the British and Soviet Post Offices to have performed their patriotic duties, the Soviet Union was now fully informed about the three British companies working on this highly classified satellite project; the sites of three British factories where it was being developed; and that it was being disguised as the third satellite of the Skynet series, the rest of which are ordinary communications satellites.

Only two months later, the Defence Ministry allowed through a further blunder, when Zircon contractors British Aerospace officially announced the position of the third British 'Skynet satellite' — over the Soviet Union! As we explained in the original *NS* article (23 January 1987) there were then hasty attempts to hide this information again. But there is no surer way of telling a foreign adversary (or an inquisitive local journalist) that you've got something to hide.

By April 1985 it was possible to deduce that the suspicious new Skynet was in fact a British spy satellite. Perhaps, at this time, the Defence Ministry could comfort itself that apparently the codename of the new satellite had not leaked.

But even the name Zircon is in itself a breach of security. It is a stringent and long-standing rule of allocating highly classified codenames that they should never, ever, bear any relation to the project which they describe. With occasional justification, this rule is broken — the most celebrated breach was Winston Churchill's selection of Operation OVERLORD in 1944 as the codename for the Allied re-invasion of Europe. But Zircon goes too far, and without any justification, in this, the most sensitive area of all intelligence work. Zircon is a gemstone and mineral of the element Zirconium; it is, according to geological dictionaries, an 'accessory mineral of more acid igneous rocks'. One such rock is Rhyolite — a rare lava which is noted for the occasional and remarkable appearance of such gemstones in its structure.

But Rhyolite was also the codename for the first-ever American signals intelligence satellite orbited directly over the USSR. The Rhyolite name was chosen because of the symbolic relationship between the rock and the technical challenge of doing signals intelligence from space — the selection of valuable data (gemstones) from a heterogenous mass of radio and electronic 'noise' (worthless lava). So a KGB geology team might not have taken long to guess that there might be some relationship between Project Zircon, and

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Sigint satellites in space.

January-May 1986

By the start of 1986, I was aware of Project Zircon and its purpose. The next step, as Special Branch investigators have now discovered from files seized from the *New Statesman*, came in March 1986. This was a particularly suspicious and sinister manoeuvre: a telephone call by the *NS* to the Ministry of Defence Press Office in Whitehall to ask 'What is Project Zircon'. Would the MoD make a statement to us about it?

Whether through incompetence or artifice (which a Special Branch team may even now be investigating), I was told the next day that the Ministry of Defence had never heard of Zircon. That telephone call was intended to elicit any information they'd give, or at least a 'no comment'. It put the Ministry on notice that I was investigating Zircon.

In February 1986, I had just had confirmation that BBC-2 wanted to commission my *Secret Society* series. A programme on Zircon had not been included in the original proposal for the series, which had been drawn up in the summer of 1985. But it now seemed an extremely important topic, since I had discovered it was being financed behind Parliament's back. Before committing vast amounts of investigative time and BBC television resources to a programme on Zircon, however, it was only sensible to test the government's reaction. There would be no point starting to make a BBC programme, if it were to be stopped half way through by government anxiety, and pressure on the Corporation to call a halt.

But the Ministry told me they'd never heard of Zircon. The Special Branch didn't come and turn over my house. The Attorney-General didn't ring to say that there was a matter we should discuss over lunch at the Garrick Club. So at the end of March 1986, I proposed that Zircon should be one of the programmes in the *Secret Society* series. This was accepted. On 8 April 1986, the BBC-2 Contracts Department in London signed my contract for the series.

June 1986

Other programmes came first, and I and co-researcher Jolyon Jenkins didn't get stuck in to Zircon until May and June of 1986. On 4 June, Jolyon telephoned Dale Campbell-Savours MP, a member of the Parliamentary Public Accounts Committee, to see if the committee had been told about Zircon. Parliament, and the Committee, hadn't been told. They should have been. Deceit was, provisionally, established. Consequently, there was a clear public duty to pursue the story.

The next step was to establish that Zircon wasn't a figment of the BBC's (or my) imagination. So on 9 June, we filmed an interview with Professor Sir Ronald Mason, the former defence chief scientific adviser. He was visibly surprised (on film) at the mention of Zircon, and later warned us to be 'careful — for me, the name was more highly classified than Trident'. Indeed, some five per cent of the cost of Trident was being secretly diverted to pay for Zircon. We explained to him that the issue we were raising about Zircon was a flagrant breach of the agreement to inform Parliament. The Ministry keeping its promises was one thing, he commented, but getting GCHQ to obey the rules was 'quite another'. The next day, Professor Mason has since revealed, he advised the Defence Ministry of what we had said to him.

July 1986

On 2 July, Jolyon and I had lunch with the former Defence Permanent Under-Secretary, Sir Frank Cooper. GCHQ's new intelligence satellite was discussed at length, and Sir Frank agreed to a film interview on the condition that he was fully informed about the exact nature of the programme. He was so informed, and no doubt also passed this news on to his old Ministry. The name Zircon wasn't mentioned to Sir Frank, however, to avoid a repeat of the embarrassment it had cause Sir Ronald Mason. Two weeks later, on camera (and as used in the untransmitted Zircon programme), Cooper told us that he thought the satellite's major purpose was to keep up appearances with the Americans.

The day after the interview with Sir Frank Cooper, Thursday 17 July, as the Special Branch raids on the *New Statesman* have revealed, I had lunch with the Attorney General, Sir Michael Havers. The year before, at a first meeting, Havers had asked me if I would take seriously any request from him not to reveal something which he considered would damage a valid security interest. I said I would — provided the security interest could be properly explained. He agreed.

When I met Sir Michael Havers that day, six weeks had passed since the Ministry of Defence had been informed of our programme on Zircon. By 17 July, the Ministry's two most senior ex-officials knew, and had passed on, the salient facts about the Zircon enquiry. If the matter seriously disturbed the Ministry (as much as they now say), an Officials Secret Act enquiry should already have been launched. As the senior government Law Officer, Havers would know of the enquiry. If the leak wasn't serious, there would be no enquiry, and Havers wouldn't know about the programme. Sir Michael Havers didn't know.

I nevertheless told Sir Michael that many of the *Secret Society* programmes would be sensitive, and not be pleasing to some of his colleagues. But none would damage security. He accepted this assurance, which was a continuation of the previous undertaking I had given him. I had told Sir Michael that one of the programmes was particularly sensitive and would be likely to 'send Cheltenham into orbit' (a reference to GCHQ). Sir Michael acknowledged with a smile that GCHQ, like MI5, were absurdly obsessed with secrecy. We exchanged jokes about a senior MI5 official.

August 1986

In August 1986, BBC-2 Controller Graeme MacDonald officially unveiled the *Secret Society* series. The launch provided anxiety in the Corporation about the Official Secrets Act. I therefore wrote to the Head of Television (in Scotland) about the Act, noting my conversations with and undertakings to Sir Michael. The programmes would not damage security, I said, and:

> I had met the Attorney General and he was amenable in principle to appearing in the 'powers' programme . . . The Attorney's willingness to appear, knowing full well the likely nature of the *Secret Society* programme, should clearly indicate that prosecution under the Official Secrets Act was not a possibility.

Copies of this letter have been taken by the Special Branch from my house, and from the BBC.

September 1986

In September 1986, we interviewed two American experts on space intelligence, Dr John Pike and Prof. Jeffrey Richelson. They provided detailed and convincing explanations why the nature of a project like the Zircon satellite could never be concealed (an opinion confirmed this week by a former Deputy Director of the CIA itself). This evidence was of particular importance, as it was necessary for our programme to show BBC viewers that the revelation of Zircon's existence does not damage national security. The American experts more than fulfilled that task.

October 1986

Soon after 7 October, the Ministry of Defence finally took notice of our enquiries. On that day, we had interviewed Public Accounts Committee Chair Robert Sheldon MP. Sheldon had been told nothing about Zircon, he agreed — and so the Zircon programme's thesis was then finally proven. Sheldon naturally immediately initiated enquiries with the Defence Ministry, who had to admit that Zircon had by then been under way for almost four years. From Sheldon, the Ministry soon learned that the whole purpose of our programme was to expose the breach of the 'Chevaline' agreement to disclose the costs of major defence projects to parliament. So Defence Ministry Permanent Secretary Sir Clive Whitmore placed a telephone call to the BBC.

But despite the new level of official anxiety, there was still no Official Secrets Act inquiry. On 20 October 1986, I had a lengthy telephone call with Sir Michael Havers about other matters. He did not raise anything to do with Zircon, or the *Secret Society* series.

November-December 1986

The final seal of official acceptance on the programme came from the BBC's most senior legal and editorial officials. At three meetings from 10 October onwards, the BBC solicitor reviewed the Zircon programme and raised no objections. On 6 November, BBC Assistant Director General Alan Protheroe viewed a 'rough cut' in Glasgow. The national security implications were discussed at length, but Protheroe pronounced himself 'satisfied' that it would not damage national security. The few changes he ordered were on editorial and libel grounds. He then authorised the making of a final videotape, which he viewed in Glasgow on 4 December. The factual basis (as opposed to the security implications) of the Zircon programme was once again examined. Then it was 'cleared' for BBC transmission. 'I see no problem with Zipper' (the BBC name for the Zircon programme), Protheroe said 'it'll make a great first programme.'

It is now apparent that the banning of the Zircon programme stemmed entirely from Defence Ministry and GCHQ pressure, and not from the normal exercise of the BBC's judgement on security matters. And, in December 1986, despite the Defence Ministry's full knowledge, the government hadn't even whispered about any alleged breach of the Official Secrets Act. They *still* hadn't launched a security investigation. There was, in fact, no security investigation until the *New Statesman* embarrassed the Prime Minister by exposing the Zircon deception.

What is now taking place is not an inquiry into supposed Official Secrets Act offences, but an officially decreed charade of vengeance. Meanwhile, inside Whitehall, the real problem now for Cabinet Ministers is to ensure that any moles that may be found turn up in some other Minister's Department. □

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'Let's have the enemy in front of us'

Neil Kinnock has been under fire over the spy satellite row, Labour's defence policy, 'loony left' councils, trade union reform and tactical voting. This week he replies to his critics in a candid interview with **NS** *editor* **JOHN LLOYD** *and political editor* **PETER KELLNER**

John Lloyd: When the Prime Minister asked you to back her on a 'grave issue of national security', did you have any choice?

Neil Kinnock: Well, this leader of the opposition doesn't choose to make a choice in those circumstances. The information available in some cases days, in some cases weeks, after that Thursday (22 Jan.) was not available then and we could have been talking, of course, about the most critical issue. And on that basis, as I said in a statement that I made at nine o'clock that morning, the decision is to take their word for it until there is a proof to the contrary.

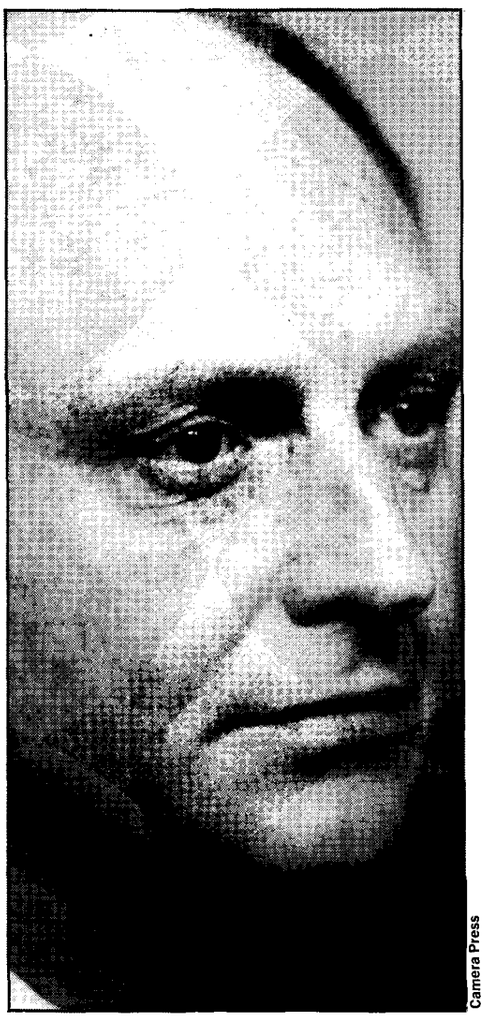
Peter Kellner: Do you think we were wrong to publish?

NK: Oh, that's not my decision. What I think is wrong, is a government having acquaintance with details of a possible publication or broadcast which they think contradicts the interests of national security, and doing damn all. What they did was to make a hell of a mess of it for all those months and then, as I said last week, and as I said the week before that, tried to cover their own embarrassment by using all the weaponry they command — either the formal weaponry of the Official Secrets Act and all that follows from that (with this peculiar role of the Attorney General), or the less formal but even more McCarthyite tactics of the *left-wing* magazine and all the rest of it. So it's the combination of botching and bullying, that is par for the course with this lot. But the basic question, if you are told, on the best authority, there is a matter of national security at stake, support is the only basis on which you can act.

JL: Having read the *NS* piece, do you think it *was* a breach of security?

NK: I think that the disclosure, the existence of a possible Zircon project, since it was a secret, is obviously a breach of that secret, whether it jeopardised national security of course is a matter yet to be demonstrated, but that's the view that I took.

PK: In any reform of the Official Secrets Act, would you like to see it easier or harder to prosecute journalists for publishing secrets?



Camera Press

'What would you say to those who feel like voting tactically?' 'Grow up, that's what I'd say . . . the one thing people can't vote for is a coalition'

NK: I don't think that journalists have any lesser or greater obligation in that respect than ordinary citizens. The fact that they are professionally committed to discovery is one thing. They should then take a judgement as to whether they want to turn their discovery into an exposure. And so I don't think there is a special bracket called journalists. The point is that if a journalist does find, by process of investigation, something that he thinks ought to be made public, then that journalist presumably will either be willing to take the risk, or not willing to take the risk; consider the information to be so vital as to be necessary to get to the public, or so secret as to actually jeopardise the security of the country in which he lives. Those have to be matters of judgement.

I think what you'd have to demonstrate is that the motive of the journalist, the purpose of his action, was to damage the security of the country. The guy might want it out in the open, but then the test is his judgement as to whether his desire to get it out in the open was mischievous in terms of national security, or purely malevolent in terms of political embarrassment or benign in terms of what he thought the public should know. So in those areas the important thing to do is to tighten up what a national secret is and then to have to make judgements on the basis of the motivation of journalists. The point is if there was an automatic defence that because someone is a journalist the disclosure can be as important as it likes, as long as the guy isn't a spy, it would make total nonsense of any action that we wanted to take against espionage, and it is conceivable that we may want to.

I think it's to do with motivation. If you've got to prove a person guilty of a desire to contradict the interests of national security as defined within the Freedom of Information Act or whatever name it was given, then that would be sufficient guarantee of freedom without being ridiculously open-ended so far as those who were actually spying but, say, took the profession of journalist in order to excuse their action.

JL: Do you think this government behaves less liberally on such matters than others? Or is this reaction common to all governments?

NK: No, I think it pre-dates the raid on Glasgow or the *New Statesman* by a long way and has been worsening since 1979. I think that it is particularly characteristic of this government. I think that the very office of government imposes a requirement not to act as many other people would act or as the same people would act, were they not in government. But when there is such a consistency of antagonism to what we regarded as the civil liberties of association and expression as to be notable, right throughout the lifetime of this government and in the whole philosophy of those who currently lead the Conservative Party, then it adds up to much more than the single act of sending in the Special Branch to have tea in the *New Statesman* or porridge in BBC Glasgow. I have reason to believe that the police are among those irritated by the way in which they're put in the eye of the storm.

I think that had I taken any different attitude than I did, Boadicea would be marching all over the place, and the whole context of the raid on *New Statesman* and the raid on BBC Glasgow would have been entirely different. I think that instead of the public being able to regard Duncan as a journalist going about his business (and I'm not even passing comment on the way he goes about that) and cups of tea and a mixture between horror and farce, then I think that he would have been public enemy number one. The *Statesman*

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would have been some kind of conspiratorial organ and the people in BBC Glasgow would have been sleepers on behalf of some foreign power and I'm sure that would have been the scenario for the last fortnight.

PK: On defence — how would the removal of American nuclear bases make Britain safer?

NK: I think it is worthwhile drawing attention — you've previously drawn attention to this — to the fact that the polls have for a long time shown a majority in favour of withdrawing American nuclear bases. There are two things: first of all, the whole process of changing from first use of nuclear weapons, which is part of the argument about getting rid of cruise, of changing the role of the F-111s and of closing down the Poseidon bases. It is part of the argument in which you say you do not instal or deploy weapons at such range or for such a purpose as to supplement a first use policy, and if we can secure a change from first use policy as many in the US including several former Secretaries of State and Defence Secretaries counsel, then that would make for greater common security. Second thing is, there is an argument that says that the whole purpose of disabling Britain by nuclear strike would arise from our accommodation of nuclear weapons, most particularly cruise, simply because the nature of the weapons themselves and their mobility would require saturation bombing, to disable them over a very wide area of South East England and East Anglia. So the second reason is not to even get to the situation in which that would be a justification.

PK: On the left, the argument is put forward that if you wanted to make Britain safer you'd have to close down the various US early warning stations. If anything these are more important to the Americans.

NK: I'm conscious of the desire of the few to keep on shifting the goal posts. What I can say is the argument's gone on longer than a quarter of a century, I've been engaged in it for 30 years, and the progress towards a non-nuclear defence policy for Britain, and a change of our disposition within NATO is certainly very significant. Now I think that those arguments can be conducted against a background of further changes that may take place in East-West relations, specifically within Western Europe and specifically in terms of our domestic defence and in terms of the domestic defence of the United States of America. How people satisfy their appetites by taking bigger bites than are necessary is difficult to understand.

PK: Let me take the criticism from the right of the Labour Party which concedes on Polaris but on the question of cruise and its relationship to no first use says — shouldn't that be negotiated away?

NK: I don't know anybody at all who doesn't want cruise out. I don't know anybody at all who hasn't opposed cruise coming in. And I don't know anybody who can suggest where cruise could be redeployed, especially since Genscher is the foreign minister still of the Federal Republic of Germany. The Italians wouldn't take it, the Spaniards even want the American conventional forces out, they don't want any nuclear forces, the Greeks wouldn't take it, neither would the Dutch nor the Belgians, nor the Norwegians nor the Danes.

PK: But you must have heard the argument, in private, from the right, that we should discuss or negotiate on these weapons?

NK: What we are going to do, as I repeatedly have made clear, is to follow the pattern established within every other country remaining within NATO and that's changed their disposition within the strategic structure of NATO, and that is to discuss it in its process of implemention with the other Allies.

PK: Supposing you have a Democratic US President who says — I want to negotiate a deal with the Soviets including arms reduction and a no first use strategy — but if you get rid of cruise first you weaken any bargaining hand with Moscow.

> ***'There is a lot of guff written about the inability of Labour to snuggle up with the Liberals and SDP . . . The reason for not doing it is that it would paralyse everything. You want to get on with the business, create jobs, build houses . . .'***

NK: No, who's going to argue that? First of all, all the conceivable candidates for the US presidency thus far will make it clear on the hustings, some already have, that they're in favour of no first use. Secondly, no first use isn't bargaining because the Russians have already got no first use, insofar as these declarations are sustainable, they have already got that, and they've always had that. There are a lot of people who say, on the other side, including the Republicans: 'Hey, we've only got the cruise because you asked for them, we didn't want to deploy them, wasn't our decision'. And by saying that, they acknowledge that if we asked for them to come here, we have the right to send them back, and that's got to be the arrangement.

PK: Isn't your biggest problem selling this to the voters? The Bomb is seen as Britain's last connection with greatness. However bogus it might be, that's a powerful thought.

NK: Well, that's the problem there, isn't it? Every politician says, we're at a turning point, we're at a crossroads, we're at a watershed, but in two respects more than any other in the next election, we *are*. The one is the decision about whether we actually go further into nuclear defence, or whether we use what resources we've got to do the job we can do. And there's a real choice, and it has got all those emotions going round it and the one that I respect is the emotion of the men and women who were actually around in September 1939.

The problem there is that they, a lot of them, haven't got hold of the fact that nuclear weapons are so categorically different from the exchanges of that war as to make it necessary to have a different perception of what effective defence actually amounts to. I don't blame them for that, it was the most scarring experience of their whole lives, so they're not going to forget about that. So that's the one thing that we've got to really make the decision about. Are we going to hang on to remnants at fantastic and disabling expense, or are we going to make up our minds that there is a different and better way to achieve the defence of obligations that we've got as a country and we will have as a government, and I think that there is. That's why it wouldn't just be a matter of convenience to dilute the proposition, it would be a cop-out on a vast scale, and we've got to face up to it.

The second one is whether this country is going to be in ten years' time a manufacturing nation or whether it isn't, that's the second one. People of our generation have got to face up to, and make a decision about, these two issues. So I understand the emotions, but the alternative to taking this view is, I repeat the word, to disable ourselves in terms of defence, in terms of resources, and in terms of what this country should be like as a relatively prosperous, pretty civilised, medium-sized power with a great deal of residual influence and even greater potential influence. ▷

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JL: You have spoken of a different leadership in Moscow. Does that not point to making your decisions, as Prime Minister, on disarmament, contingent on their anticipated response?

NK: There is a pinpoint of light. I think the sun has come out a bit more since then, but there's a good reason for working at arms length, and so I don't think that we ought to be starry-eyed, because there's an adjustment in the direction of realism in the Soviet Union leadership. Now the idea of making our relationships and the design of our role in the world for the next 50 years contingent upon the pace of change and the capability of delivering change, on the other side of the East/West divide, is to give all of the timing to people over whom we have absolutely no control. So I don't think that's a competent way in which to conduct things.

I think it's much better to say all right, on the table thus far we have a proposal that there will be an equivalent missile-for-equivalent-missile reduction, that there will be a proper examination of the consequences of getting rid of our bit of the INF [Intermediate Nuclear Force], and that clearly for reasons of domestic, economic and technological pressure, the movement of the Soviet Union is in the right direction, and work on that. You can clearly do a great deal more with all those things in government than you can do in opposition. And to the extent that breath has to be held it's worth people holding their breath until that can be delivered. What you can't do in opposition, and what I refuse to do, is to undertake any form of negotiation or to make policy contingent upon what may or may not happen because you haven't got the full hand of cards.

JL: The other issue besides defence which the Tories have chosen as an electoral winner is the 'loony left' in Labour councils. You have refused to pledge full support to their spending policies. Does that mean tensions before and after the election?

NK: Either what we say about Thatcher is right or it isn't right, and it *is* right. And the scale of destruction has been in two spheres, one in the services required to meet people's needs and secondly in the wealth-creating capacity. If those things are right, the idea of shovel-fulls of restoration are simply irrational however desirable. I refuse to give it, and if some people are wounded by that, well that's tough but it's truthful. We must target areas geographically but also target objectives in the way that brings the speediest and most effective return in terms of jobs and in terms of education and services, and that's why the priorities have got to be very deliberate.

JL: The other problem here is the issues which some council leaders have prioritised touch deep chords — sometimes of prejudice, sometimes of deeply-held belief — on race relations, on the family, on sexuality.

NK: The problem is that the enemy of idealism is zealotry and you get people with damn good ideas and the best possible objectives to which nobody who is reasonable could take exception, who, by their actions, and by the misrepresentation of their actions, can have those decent initiatives made to look like complete mania. Were we not in politics and did people not presume to be fairly professional about the way in which they represent people and handle ideas, then all right they could be written down as an overstatement.

But we do live in politics, we do live in a society where you can guarantee that the merest infelicity will be exploded as misrepresentation and you have to work in that knowledge. You know I've said so many times that that doesn't mean the suspension of conscience or the hiding of principle, anything like that, it does mean that we fight the most effective way. That's the problem. Now I'm sure that there are a couple of people in among those that have ideas that would offend me, but they wouldn't beat me in argument. That's not a problem. It's when, not those ideas, but other ideas and other policies can be made to look as if they just landed from another planet, that's when the alarm bells should be ringing for them, not for me.

'You can't run a country on a basis of kicking for touch'

PK: The capacity to embarrass you must be large. Aren't you worried or embarrassed by some of the candidates who will be standing at the next election?

NK: I don't get worried and I don't get embarrassed. Sometimes, I get a little intemperate, but embarrassed? That's an idle sentiment in this job. Go back over the history, when they did the left = Gestapo scare and right through the 'fifties hell, the way in which people who now would be regarded as the mainstream were seen as being agents of Moscow, and it was all done and done and done again. Now you either live in the knowledge that that is the case and lead the Labour Party or you are afraid to live in that knowledge in which case you don't lead the Labour Party. It just goes with the job. My irritation comes from the fact that people just don't recognise the terrain on which they're fighting, and sometimes come to the conclusion that to make that recognition is somehow to stain themselves with all of the terrible poison of realism.

PK: What happens when you come to power? What do you say to the local authorities who put up a list of projects to you?

NK: Say what we told them already, publicly and privately, and you can go through the speeches. We're going to have to make decisions according to priorities, the areas of greatest need get the highest priority, very obviously, the schemes which can produce the biggest return in terms of jobs of people currently employed. It doesn't take months to work out.

PK: The Monday after the election — does the new Secretary for the Environment have extra money to spend on projects, or not?

NK: On overall public expenditure it is now well known that Bryan Gould has been getting together all the various job suggestions which are pretty refined already, in order to determine public expenditure obligations arising from what we can do in terms of these jobs over a two-year period. That's something that's never been done by any opposition before. I think a little bit of credit is due. We'll have those details by middle of next month. That's at the national level and in terms of public expenditude implications. And obviously we understand the constraints under which we operate.

Things are bloody bad in the economy at the moment; I think that we're actually going to find that they're even worse, when we get access to the details. I think they're even worse. I'll give you an instance. The so-called overspend that was recognised in the Autumn statement was a product entirely of the fact that there was much greater and wider poverty than even the government thought. They've under-calculated again this year. Now when we discover, let's say, that they've under calculated to a factor of £1.5bn, because it was £2.5bn last year, so £1.5 billion miscalculation falls on the lucky side, then considerations like that can have an influence obviously, and I think not just that they've been fiddling the figures that they've published, I think that they've been covering the figures that they *haven't* published.

JL: On jobs — in a speech some months ago you praised Japan's management/labour system . . .

NK: I qualified the point. I said that I was not presuming for one second to uproot and transplant, but I said that the real choice is between the set of social relationships which they have and the alternative set of social relationships which Thatcher's trying to bring in.

JL: But can you as Prime Minister get the country moving — to create a sense of dynamism in industry?

NK: Well, you're back into emotions aren't you? In a free society, and there's no way in which that can be dictated or should be dictated, from the top or by anyone else. My whole approach is based on the view that the electorate are adults, and the people in plants on both sides are adults, and that they recognise, just reviewing the record of their own companies and the potential of their own companies, that they should look to alternatives.

Now, if they're provided with an environment in which efforts are made to reduce the costs of borrowing, to support efforts at training, to sponsor research and development and to try and encourage greater strength in domestic and world markets, by our attitude to the currency and a number of other things, then if they actually don't take advantage of it, there's no law I can pass that requires them to. Now, if you say, oh, well, that's the way the Labour Party describes the shortcoming of its approach to socialism, well, I'll make an eight year-old confession, that is the case. But unless somebody is proposing a command economy, and I don't think seriously anybody in the Labour Party ever has, then that's the position we've got.

JL: You've talked of an accord with the unions where the unemployed are assisted first, then the low-paid, then those in work. That suggests an accord on wages?

NK: Well, that's taken almost word for word out of *Partners in Rebuilding Britain* and that's the priority scale that's set up in one paragraph, which didn't take a hell of a lot of writing in that I don't remember any agonies over it, it got full-hearted

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consent. And the other thing is, again something I said repeatedly, but it's worth repeating again, is what I said in the TUC last year, and I deliberately said it in the TUC, because I think that's the best place to say it, that everybody has got to be clear, that failure to be part of that process might slow the pace but it's not going to change the direction, we're going to get on with it in any case.

JL: Yet what this government is doing is presiding over a large rise in real wages while the priorities you speak of are not being addressed.

NK: Yes, but you see what interruption is proposed to the system that has secured these rises in real wages? If none is proposed is that because of a reluctance to act or because of the impracticality demonstrated by repeated efforts in the last 25 years? No, a statutory policy is not practical, that's the thing, if it was practicable we'd have to chew on it. But it's not practical, it can't deliver.

JL: You've said you'll retain the voting rights in the 1984 Trade Union Act. What about picketing?

NK: I maintain the right to picket. The real division is between picketing to be allowed as a civil right up to the point where it becomes a source of disorder where it obviously can't be allowed, and picketing which can be prosecuted by the use of the law by an employer against whom the picketing is directed. Now there's a big difference there. The fact is, of course, that there's only been one really sensational, if you like case-forming, experience of an employer acting like that, and that's Murdoch. What other employers have taken out the injunctions preventing the use of the picket, and making the unions, despite their condemnation, despite their distancing, despite their lack of parentage for the tactic itself, liable at law and capable of being totally destroyed? Now that can't be upheld as a principle.

PK: When do you think the election will be?

> **'I want an election as quickly as possible . . . she's lethal for this country and has been since day one'**

NK: I think still it will be early summer. Simply because she's even more familiar with the news coming in than we are and it would rather spoil things for her, wouldn't it, if that news turned into fact in people's lives before the election. The other thing is this: there is such a fragility about the current situation. It depends upon sustained levels of credit growth, not just holding on to what exists now but keeping on going, and monumental household debt. Secondly, it depends upon fairly feverish balance in international exchanges and thirdly, it depends on the willingness of the government to be dismissive about the importance of a huge manufactured trade deficit which is feeding into a balance of payments deficit. Now, if you take the volatility of sentiment about all these things, then the possibility of crisis of confidence is permanent now. She's not going to want to string out that possibility by keeping things going long.

PK: Isn't it your job to close off the option of the government going soon, while the news still seems good?

NK: Well, you write that speech. You write the interview in which I say ah, clever us we want an election in '88. Now, as it happens, I don't. I literally do want it as quickly as possible because I think she's lethal for this country, she's absolutely bloody lethal and she has been since day one. So I really want it now, but even if I didn't, how do you proffer the argument? I don't want a sterling crisis, I want unemployment going down. I don't want to win the election because there's more miserable people around. It would be great if all the stuff they're pumping out now about the recovering was true, I'd love it. Anybody with 22 per cent unemployment in his own constituency would be thrilled to bits. But it's not happening and that's why we want them out.

PK: What do you say to someone who agrees with you about that but lives in a constituency where Labour doesn't have a chance? What would you say to these who feel like voting tactically?

NK: Grow up. That's what I say . . . You calculate the effect of that indulgence is that everybody else who feels like you will do exactly the same thing and so guarantee removal. It's not possible within the system. I think you are the man who coined the phrase, the one thing that people can't vote for is a coalition. The other thing is, it's a postponement of decisions, it's a kick for touch, and you can't run a country on a basis of kicking for touch. You talk about voting for the Alliance — hell, which one?

JL: Is not the urge to vote tactically saying no to a Thatcher government?

NK: I don't think that that is sufficient basis either, you have got to vote *for* things, not just against, and while I realise that every election is determined greatly by what you can call the negative and resentful features, all elections must be determined to a significant degree by the positive features. So the thing is you see again is that there is a lot of guff written about the inability of the Labour Party to snuggle up with the Liberals and Social Democrats because of all the instincts and all the rest of it. I just think that it would be bloody immature, and no matter what my personal feelings so far as leaders or individual members are concerned that wouldn't be sufficient reason for saying, oh, well, y'know for vanity and a sense of destiny and all that stuff we won't do this. The reason for not doing it, as I try to point out, is that it would paralyse everything. You want to get on with the business, want to create jobs, build houses, do all those things and you have to look over your shoulder to see what mood David Owen's begun the week in, and whether he's in his social democratic or his social market phrase.

That situation is not going to arise. Let's have the enemy in front of us, not behind us. □

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— *Auberon Waugh*
31 January 1987

All right, all right, so the full quote (*Spectator* 31 January) was: 'The Kremlin has only to take out a subscription to the *New Statesman*, *Spectator*, and *Literary Review* to learn all it needs to know about what is happening in this country'. What the hell.

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Psst . . . wanna buy the company you work for?

John Rentoul

IF YOU were offered shares in the company you work for, you might say you had better things to do with your money. Especially as a few hundred shares isn't going to give you a say in the way the company is run. Indeed, if you work in the private sector, you may already have some shares under the '1978 scheme' — because you get them tax free if you hold onto them for five years.

But in America a different kind of scheme gets help from the taxpayer: employee share ownership plans, or Esops. They are important because they give a company's workforce a collective shareholding which can carry some weight. Now they are being set up over here; and, although British tax law isn't designed for Esops, legal experts at New Bridge Street Consultants have found loopholes which reduce tax on them.

This week the labour movement launched the first of its 'model Esops', at Roadchef, the motorway services company. The model is being promoted by Unity Trust, the bank set up by the trade unions and the Co-operative Bank in 1984, and the Roadchef deal, which gives half its 700 full-time employees a 12 per cent stake in their company, was negotiated with the General, Municipal and Boilermakers' Union who represent them.

The idea is simple. A trust is set up which borrows money from a bank — in this case Unity Trust — to buy shares in a company on behalf of its employees. Over time, the company pays dividends on these shares to the trust, which uses them to pay off the loan, and the shares are gradually allocated to individual employees. They are still held by the trust, but the employees can then sell them or receive dividends direct.

Employees don't have to put up any money to finance the trust, but they are not getting 'something for nothing'. Setting up an Esop involves the workforce agreeing what Unity Trust calls a 'medium-term development plan' with the company. This sets out targets for productivity and perhaps job creation, in return for which the company agrees to make extra bonus payments to the Esop trust. And the tax advantages mean that both company and workforce get 'something for less'.

So, it's obvious what's in it for the company — it's a cheap way of raising capital (the money paid for the new shares can be invested in expansion) and workforce commitment at the same time. But what's in it for the unions? Their members like them, is the most cynical answer. Mike Marsden, the Unity Trust executive in charge of Esops, has been overwhelmed by enquiries. 'Things got a bit ahead of where we thought we would be at this time,' he says. He is talking to two Rover Group subsidiaries and to management and unions in several National Bus companies, as well as a number of private companies. Although some higher union officials may be hostile, says Marsden with a metaphorical look over his shoulder (the general secretaries of many of the big unions sit on Unity Trust's board, chaired by Ron Todd of the TGWU), 'often the introduction comes through the trade unions involved'.

IF ESOPS ARE the coming wave, it's worth asking what they might have to do with the future of socialism, or — more accurately — capitalism. The Labour Party has always advocated co-ops as a way of giving workers a stake in their enterprise, but it has never done much about it. Last year's statement on 'social ownership' gives the customary nod to the ancient co-operative wing of the Labour movement, but it promises also to promote 'democratic employee share ownership plans to enable working people collectively to exercise influence over their companies'.

Worker co-ops have spread in the past ten years, although there are still only 1,000 of them, employing about 10,000 people. In America, 11 million people work in Esop companies.

> ***'Can the Labour Party propound a form of enterprise which is more democratic than individual worker capitalism, but suitable for larger, more expansionary companies than the average strictly egalitarian co-op?'***

The important word in the Labour Party statement is 'democratic'. The Conservative ideal is of shareholder democracy, as in the Westland affair, when the fate of the company was decided by key holdings secretly changing hands at above the market price. The Conservative model Esop is the National Freight Consortium, bought by its workers in 1982. The state-owned parcels company was the only one named in the 1979 Tory manifesto for privatisation, but ran into financial trouble and was only just sold off before the 1983 election, for a measly £5 million.

Ministers often cite it because it's now a profitable, expanding company, and 83 per cent of its shares are held by employees, former employees and their families. What they don't tell you is that no one else (apart from the banks who financed the buy-out and hold the other 17 per cent) is *allowed* to own the shares. In fact, only three-fifths of the employees own shares, and almost all are small holdings worth less than £10,000. Four of the directors, on the other hand, including chairperson Sir Peter Thompson, have holdings worth over £1 million.

Of course, a £10,000 stake is far better than no stake at all, which is what most workers have in their employer. But, in terms of ownership and control, the NFC is almost as far from a 'one person one vote' co-op as any other company. Can the Labour Party propound a form of enterprise which is more 'democratic' than the NFC but suitable for larger, more aggressive and expansionary enterprises than the average strictly egalitarian co-op? The social ownership statement contrasts 'cosmetic' schemes with 'genuine schemes for employee participation which carry with them influence as well as income', in which individuals hold shares collectively, rather than as isolated and powerless individuals.

The statement promises model trust rules in the Companies Act and tax concesssions to Esops which are managed on the principle of 'one person one vote' and are 'introduced in full consultation with employees through the appropriate trade unions'. The success of Unity Trust's Esops, then, is a test of one of Labour's replacements for old-style nationalisation. The Unity Trust model allows for the trustees of the employees' shares to be elected by 'one person one vote', and for employees to be balloted on how their holding is to be voted at company AGMs.

In the long term, this provides a radical alternative to Tory 'worker capitalism', which is often just an afterthought to the government's limited vision of 'wider share ownership'. This slogan is never going to 'spread wealth', let alone power, because it involves selling shares off cheaply to them that already hath, as Mrs Thatcher tacitly admitted when she dropped this paragraph from a recent speech:

> I read recently of one man's vision of wider property ownership, of a society in which the British family would be worth £100,000. It looks like a target out of our reach. But then so would widespread home ownership and share ownership have seemed to our parents.

In a divided nation where the poorer half of the population has an average net worth of £3,500 per head and the richer half an average of £55,000, we can only conclude that she was right to drop it.

The problem of reducing this division goes to the heart of what the Labour Party stands for, and the difference between it and the Liberal/SDP Alliance. The 1978 scheme — which gives tax relief to individual employee shareholdings (and which the Unity Trust model makes use of) — was brought in because of pressure from the Liberals in the Lib-Lab pact after the last Labour government lost its majority. Labour has now resumed the initiative, saying that shares have to be held collectively to make ownership meaningful, and that there has to be a bias to the less well-off. This is missing from the Alliance policy of industrial 'partnership' in its new programme, *The Time Has Come*, launched two weeks ago. But there's hope for a future minority Labour government — Liberal leader David Steel quotes John Stuart Mill in his foreword:

> The industrial economy which divides society absolutely into two portions, the payers of wages and the receivers of them, is neither fit for, nor capable of, indefinite duration. The possibility of changing this system depends [on] the entire body of labourers collectively owning capital and participating in profits. (*Principles of Political Economy*, 1848.)

In 140 years we have come closer to that ideal, but not much. □

The New Statesman, *The Industrial Society and Unity Trust have organised an international conference on The role of Esops in British Industry. It will take place on 8 & 9th April at The Industrial Society, Carlton House Terrace, London SW1. Phone Jo Gardiner, 01-839 4300 for details.*

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ESSAY

Knowledge in an open prison

There's more to museums than audio-visuals or admission charges. Behind recent arguments stands an institution whose fundamental structure might be more appropriate to the 17th century. What happens to history's raw material, asks* EILEAN HOOPER-GREENHILL, *when you put it in a glass case?

BRITAIN'S MUSEUMS have been attracting a surprising amount of media attention of late, much of it celebratory: new themes, new 'accessibility', new forms of 'interaction' with visitors. Yet for most people the experience of most museums remains that of a three-dimensional catalogue. Display cases are still arranged in linear series round the walls, objects neatly placed within them, each bearing its own identifying label. The order of things is remarkably resistant to change, and rarely questioned.

Museums are our warehouses of knowledge, epistemological institutions whose peculiarity is that they work with material objects. Their role is to select and accumulate — but the actual principles of inclusion and exclusion that inform this process are never voiced. However it's these unspoken preferences that order the arbitrary results of death, discovery, donation or sale and bind them to social, institutional and epistemological hierarchies.

The artefacts which fill our museums embody discourse itself; they are material manifestations of techniques and effects, representations of the play of power. Their original production was always the result of conflict and struggle at many different levels; their subsequent fate reveals social rhythms, functional shifts, histories of desire. In his book *Le système des objects*, the French social theorist Jean Baudrillard set out a taxonomy of objects and their classifications. It included size, form and degree of 'functionality', the human gestures which objects demand, the length of time they might last, the time of day when they emerge, the material they transform (whether the object is a coffee-grinder or a mirror), and how far their uses are social or exclusive. And once discrete objects are formed into a *group*, these complex classifications mutate and expand — an object may be fixed in relation to one category but arbitrary in relation to another.

So any object, any artefact, is always caught in a powerful, fluctuating movement of possibilities and potentialities — a flow of meanings that is also socially disruptive. Until, that is, it ends up in a museum. For there objects are confined, incarcerated, placed in a permanent, fixed relation to one another. Thus pinned and classified, their individual histories and identities are lost. Most museum classifications are based exclusively on surface features — here are all the Roman bronze mirrors, here are the 18th-century mahogany chairs. Estimate and compare their production dates; measure and compare their decorative styles. But a mirror, for example, also transforms the subject, a chair also represents a degree of sociality — yet such things are not the concern of museum classifications, which simply record surface effects and deny everything but the immediately visible. The limits of the kinds of 'research' carried out by museums also serve to conceal the object's own radical powers of exposition: the research merely goes from the surface to the provenance, to a chronological itemisation of ownership and location. It's ironic, then, that the museum's central feature should be called a *display* case — when it so thoroughly and systematically hides all but the formal and technical features of everything it contains.

> ***'How ironic that the museum's central feature should be called a* display *case — when it so thoroughly and systematically hides all but the formal and technical features of everything it contains'***

Let's just take one obvious example, from the National Army Museum in London — the machine-gun. In this museum the weapon is placed within a purely technological history of warfare: we are shown the changes in design, the efficiency of working parts, the various rates-of-fire. What we're certainly not shown — because they are effectively neutralised by the display — are the wounds inflicted, the deaths produced; or the gun as a symbol in the construction of masculine identity; or the political and military prioirities demonstrated by machine-guns old and new; or how the machine-gun changed the nature of warfare; or what happened to cultures and societies as a result. For example. Less emotively, the same points apply to other artefacts, other 'displays'; in each case what is at issue is the poverty of museum-constructed 'knowledge'.

* * * * *

IN *THE ORDER OF THINGS* (published here in 1970), Michel Foucault has illuminatingly charted those epistemological mutations that can be discerned in the relationships between words and things, from the 16th century to the present. This history is marked, for Foucault, by a succession of *epistemes* — essentially, transindividual codes of knowledge which circumscribe the possibilities of thought and speech in particular periods. In the Renaissance episteme, all things, natural and artificial, were interpreted as signs. Both magic and erudition were to be found within the endless circle of similitude. The surface features of stones and bones, herbs and metals, were read in order to discover the hidden play of resemblances linking them together. But with the Classical episteme of the 17th century, this endless searching ceased: surface features were now measured and ordered,

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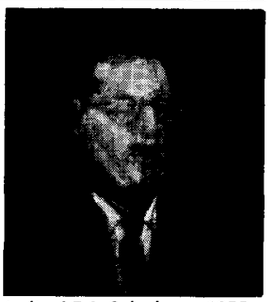

Francis Bacon, *Portrait of R.J. Sainsbury*, 1955

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things arranged according to their place in a family (as in the botanical classificatory system of Linnaeus). Identities became fixed; finite tables of knowledge established. Foucault also describes a further mutation at the end of the 18th century, as the Classical gives way to the Modern age, and to our own structure of rationality. In-depth perception replaces the two-dimensional gaze, deeper reasons are sought for surface effects, causes pursued. The Humanities as we know them are born.

Meanwhile, back in the museum, the announcement of their birth is still awaited. The Classical period lives on, unperturbed, in the glass cases of tabulated knowledge. Each case is laid out for the gaze of the spectator to construct as his own world, with himself (for this is a male world) at the centre. With its single, eye-level viewpoint and vanishing-point at centre-back, its perspective represented by arrangements of objects by size, the display case shares the structure of Renaissance paintings — a structure which endured in art until the end of the 19th century. But here the illusion of a 'piece of the world' is far greater — these are three-dimensional material facts. Through their individual labels, the artefacts are combined and connected in a transparent network: no secrets to be deciphered, no mysteries to be unveiled, no room for questioning. Just look and learn. And the labels also position these material facts within the museum's own vast documentation; registers, index cards, files — everything in its place in the museum's grid of knowledge.

A museum's collection depends on arbitrary, external events: the availability of funds, journeys undertaken, dispositions of inheritances, the vagaries of power relations. But the museum *imposes* a rationality on this incoherent material, and then represents it as truth. Contingent acquisitions are documented, catalogued, exhibited, worked on and over till the accretion of material achieves this truthful status. Curators appear as 'experts', supported in their pronouncements by the authority of the institutions.

* * * * *

AT THE BEGINNING of the 19th century, the philosopher Jeremy Bentham designed his famous (and never to be built) model prison, the Panopticon. Its construction would have embodied Bentham's normative principles of surveillance, measurement and categorisation — a central tower pierced with windows that could survey a surrounding cellular building housing the inmates, who were thus permanently visible to unseen warders. For Foucault, in *Discipline and Punish*, Bentham's Panopticon was the model of a disciplinary society; it placed the individual in a classified, exposed space that gave free rein to an invisible power; it constructed what he called 'docile bodies'. It might also be a model for the museum.

Curators, working within the museum, have their proscribed areas of operation, usually inaccessible and invisible to others — areas which produce the museum's 'knowledge' by documentation and research. And visitors are inevitably spectators, passive recipients of the museum's 'work'. In spite of recent and much-promoted additions of more attractive textual and visual material, the fixed relationship between subject and object remains. As we have seen, material facts are confined, laid out in serriated cells. The unbroken sequences of displays govern the visitors' movements and pace. They demand close visual attention, but the very number of exhibits means that visitors are soon exhausted, left with the malaise of inability and incompetence.

The museum's own space is controlled and watched over. Each object and each subject (the visitor) is scrutinised by anonymous, uniformed guardians who have learnt to perceive people as threats to security — a potential danger to the things that museums really care for. The air is purified, the temperature modified, the light filtered: visitors and the external environment are screened to protect the hygienic, secure and ordered space of the museum. Behind the current claims for innovation and accessibility lie an unchanged structure of knowledge and an unchallenged structure of power. Museums continue to do what they've always done — representing the arbitrary material facts of the world as transparent pictures of reality, and turning individuals into precisely the 'docile bodies' of which Foucault wrote, into passive and weary spectators. □

Eilean Hooper-Greenhill is a Lecturer in Museum Studies at the University of Leicester.

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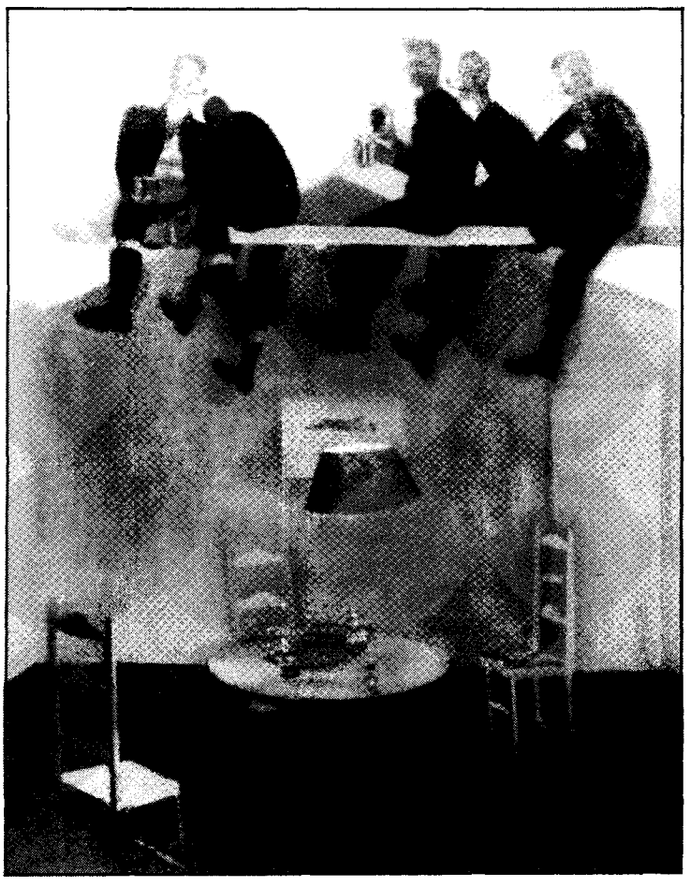

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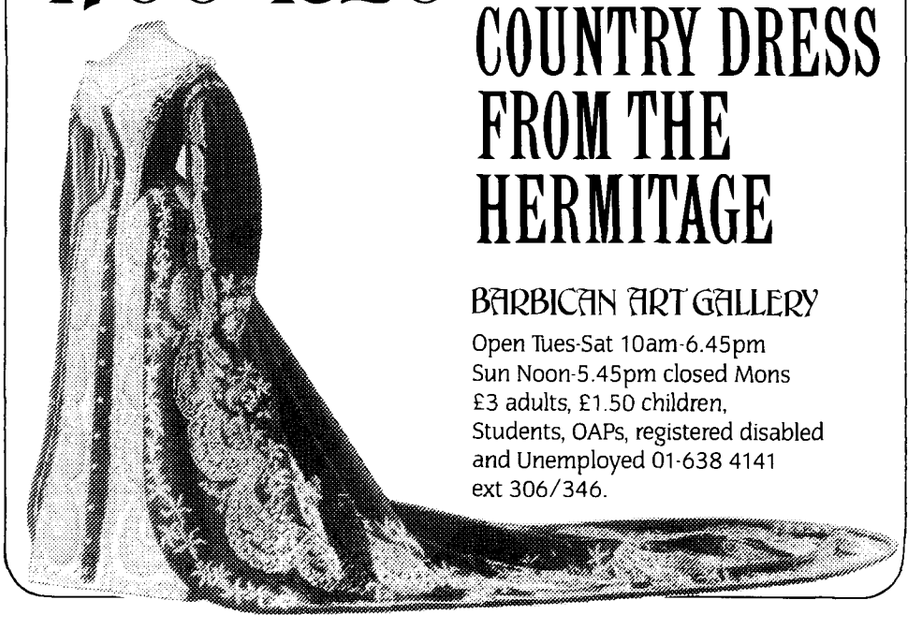

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ARTS

CINEMA

Founding father

Judith Williamson

The Mosquito Coast (PG)
Odeon Haymarket

WESTERN CULTURE, founded on the romance of exploration and funded by an economy of expansion, now faces the closing of its frontiers. There is scarcely a part of the globe where Coca-Cola — to use the obvious example — is not bought and sold; virgin territory, the stuff of both dreams and dollars, has run out.

Yet it is because exploration has been not merely incidental to our way of life, but the means of its inception, that its mythology is so resonant even — or especially — at the point of its exhaustion. The enormous glut of travel writing currently in vogue — including the best-selling popularity of Lucy Irvine's *Castaway* — could be seen as one symptom of this. Another, perhaps, is the way the jungle looms ever larger in contemporary movie imagery even as it is being diminished daily in reality. *The Mission*, *Aguirre Wrath of God*, *Fitzcarraldo*, *Apocalypse Now*, *The Emerald Forest* are all examples from the last decade. Where once explorers dragged what were to become the means of economic exploitation up waterfalls and down great rivers, today movie equipment follows the same paths to provide us with the after-image of that great project of expansion.

The fact that *Castaway* opens as a major film next week shows that the Crusoe image is a still popular part of our mythic repertoire. Robinson Crusoe has been such a tenacious figure in this culture because he represents its contradictory (if you think about it) ideologies of exploration and self-sufficiency: in this, Defoe's fiction was both symbolic and symptomatic of the moment of early capitalism. Allie Fox, hero of *The Mosquito Coast*, is trying to return to that moment; a firm believer in American values, he just doesn't like the way they've turned out, and takes to the jungle where he recreates the early days of the industrial revolution with his wonderful ice-making machine.

If exploration is the 'pure' form of colonisation, invention is the 'pure' form of industrialisation; and before he turns explorer Allie Fox starts off as an inventor in a small rural community. The stress on his filing of patents in particular recalls that exciting period of the great steam and mechanical inventions whose impact on rural America is so vividly described by Sherwood Anderson in his novel *Poor White*. It is interesting that the Amish community, backdrop to director Peter Weir's previous film *Witness*, also exemplifies an early, 'pure' form of US frontier culture; at once pioneering and self-sufficient, both the Amish and Allie Fox's Mosquito settlement (at its best) are reminiscent of a 'good' township in a Ford Western like *My Darling Clementine*. Indeed in his search for America's moment of innocence Fox follows the trail right back to the pilgrim fathers: his family celebrate their 'first Thanksgiving' practically *dressed* as Puritan settlers, in a strange drive to the pristine form of the very culture he tries to escape but comes, increasingly, to represent. For the great ice-making machine (a crazy symbol of the civilisation of the ice-box) ultimately brings destruction and pollution in a microcosm of the history Fox tried to turn back.

Paul Theroux's book (adapted by Paul Schrader for the movie) was narrated by Fox's son, so these events had no narrative independence of the boy's point of view: seen at first from 'inside' Fox's ideology, they were only later described more critically as the boy's oedipal trajectory detached him increasingly from his father's grip. However the film (despite intermittent voice-overs by the boy) is — inevitably — narrated through images and while the boy's position remains a component of the story it is no longer its boundary. Where the novel's very structure was the boy's changing perception of his father's obsessions, the film signals from the start that Fox is 'nutty': for example, through the 'here he goes again' reactions of the DIY salesmen in the very first scene, or — also early in the film — where Fox's demagogic ramblings are drowned by the noise of a chainsaw, rendering him a comic rather than a powerful figure; and not least through the almost manic way Harrison Ford gets into the role, rather like Jack Nicholson at his most rampant.

This shift in perspective is an important one, for in its visual autonomy of the book's narrative structure the film takes on a more direct relation to us as viewers. And if the character of Allie Fox embodies the contradictions at the birth of our culture, in this dimension the film itself is — as I have suggested — symptomatic of the contradictions of its decline. By losing the narrative pivot of the boy's eye view for our own as spectators, and by placing us outside Fox from the start, the film becomes less about changing *perception* than about a cumulative spectacle. We are presented with the lushness of the jungle and blond suntanned characters (the girl twins seem to have no function except to look like cute Coppertone ads): a *visual* return to the romance of exploration even while the plot is precisely an undermining of it. Cut loose from the more subtle critique of Fox's values, the movie can be viewed simply as a good adventure story, where the interest lies in 'What happens next': it has become family entertainment.

Schrader's screenplay does re-emphasise the father/son relation with its obvious commentary on authoritarian patriarchy: another way in which Fox represents 'Founding Father' culture run riot. The point of view of the oppressed (the son) is only finally liberated by the death of the father. But to take the analogy between its content and the film's symptomatic level a step further: it will be another kind of liberation when the fascinating spectacle of our own civilisation re-enacting its past finally accedes to the diverse points of view of those cultures which it 'settled' and 'explored'. □

MUSIC

Economy drive

Charles Fox

Jan Garbarek Quartet
Logan Hall

JUST AS GAUCHE young poets often imagine virtuosity has to do with extravagant similes or

Mario Camus' *The Holy Innocents* (ICA) is one of those rare films — like *Padre Padrone* or, more recently, *Alpine Fire* — which create the close physical sense of hard daily life through a clear, almost detached visual style: an effect at once aesthetic and moving. In many ways reminiscent of Bunuel, *Holy Innocents* follows a peasant family in semi-feudal service to the aristocracy in Franco's Spain of the Sixties; like Loach's *The Gamekeeper* it painfully exposes the contradictions of devotion to a brutal ruling class — but unlike Loach's woolly naturalism its crisp vision heightens the poignancy of its theme, which is as much the intensity of the inner, as the oppression of the outer lives of its subjects.

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metaphors, so newcomers to jazz absorb the notion that the aim of the improviser is, putting it crudely, to get as far away from the theme as possible. Puzzlement results from the realisation that Louis Armstrong could play 'When You're Smiling' note for note as written, yet by timing and phrasing turn it into something unmistakeably his own. To say that Jan Garbarek is able to operate in a similar fashion is not to up-grade him to the creative level of Armstrong but to indicate the way he often goes about things. It also helps to explain the problem some people have in making up their minds about whether Garbarek's music is too simple to be good.

But first, the facts. What the audience at the Logan Hall heard last Wednesday at the opening concert of a Contemporary Music Network tour which goes on for another week (Liverpool on Thursday 12 February, Manchester on Friday, Leeds Saturday, Birmingham Sunday, Newcastle Tuesday, ending up in Stirling next Wednesday) was the first public performance by Garbarek's new group, the latest in a series of quartets since the first was formed in 1969. The reason why the Norwegian saxophonist has elected to work with a German bassist, Eberhard Weber, a Swedish keyboard player, Lars Janssen, and the phenomenal Brazilian percussionist, Nana Vasconcelos, was not to underline how international jazz has become but, as he told the jazz writer Richard Cook, to create tension: 'They are all very different people.'

Not that backgrounds are irrelevant. Although it was a John Coltrane record that opened Jan Garbarek's ears to jazz, his own music suggests an unpopulated, somewhat desolate landscape, quite unlike the elbow-to-elbow sociability of Greenwich Village or Soho.

Yet Garbarek's fondness for amalgamating Norwegian folk-tunes with Afro-American-style improvising has also led to a dipping into other cultures — Hispanic and Oriental, for instance. There is, too, a historical dimension. Not for nothing did Garbarek in a radio interview the other weekend describe the sound of his latest record — *All Those Born With Wings* (ECM 1324), an LP which has Garbarek playing every instrument himself: saxophones, flutes, synthesizers, percussion — as 'medieval'.

Tamburlaine cavorting in triumph through Persepolis might have been saluted by music remarkably akin to 'Second Piece', the second track on the LP but also the number the quartet used to kick off the second half of the concert. Garbarek's curved soprano saxophone whinnied like an Indian *shehnai*, Vasconcelos' bass drum emphasised the processional pomp and decorum. Vasconcelos, of course, is at once the most unconventional and charismatic performer in the group. Whether bowing, plucking or striking the *berimbau* (it resembles nothing so much as an archer's bow skewered into a pumpkin) in 'The Companion', or, in 'The Gesture', mixing assorted yelps and bird calls with the shaking of handfuls of bells and the slapping — so rhythmically, so unlike a slimming exercise — of legs and hips and thighs, he contributes virtuosity of a sort that is missing from Garbarek's LP. Eberhard Weber, his electric bass a stretched-out triangle, the kind of shape that would have looked at home in a Tudor consort, displays a more predictable brilliance. Keeping a lower profile than the others, Lars Janssen took fewer solos, underpinning, sustaining, devising suitable textures, the man who preserved the balance.

But in a way that is also what Garbarek sets out to do. As a performer he leads yet does not dominate, playing whatever is necessary for a composition to work, his improvising a matter of detail rather than a bold outline — a gurgle, a gentle curlicue, the sort of ululation flamenco singers go in for. And he deploys wooden flutes (notably in the frisky 'The Crossing Place') with the same sort of economy with which he handles his saxophones. In the end, liking or disliking Garbarek's music depends upon whether you find his compositions either too relaxed, meandering rather than exploratory, or too repetitive in achieving their dramatic impact. On record, often cushioned by over-luxurious technological expertise, it can seem excessively romantic. But in the flesh, performed by four exceptional musicians to a capacity audience, the virtues fall into place, spareness takes over, simplicity becomes a strength. □

MUSIC

End of the track

Simon Reynolds

FUNK FLESH + PUNK ATTITUDE: this was the fantasy that possessed the rock intelligentsia in the early Eighties. The result was a series of creative misrecognitions of black pop. Groups like Style Council and The Redskins made soul the vehicle for their politics of affirmation. Others (Talking Heads, Cabaret Voltaire, 23 Skidoo, A Certain Ratio) staged a remotivation of funk, replacing its extrovert upfulness with artrock concerns: alienation, breakdown, psychosis. Typically, there was fascination with both the technocratic system of Western modernity *and* the breaking loose of instincts suppressed by that system.

These concerns gave birth to difficult dance music, more suited to cerebral contemplation in the bedroom than mindless frugging on the dancefloor; as Simon Frith put it, 'It's still the progressive rock mentality, but applied to rhythm, as opposed to melody and harmony.' *Avant-funk* was a kind of psychedelia, but oblivion was to be attained not through rising above the body, rather through immersion in the physical, self-loss in animalism. Underneath it all was a naive identification of Blackness with unrepression.

The genre has long seemed played out; as David Stubbs puts it: 'pub rock for the 22nd century'. Strange, then, at this late hour, to encounter an unexpected validation of the genre, a pinnacle even. Such is **Skinny Puppy**'s *Mind The Perpetual Intercourse* (Play It Again Sam). The familiar motifs and signatures are all present: Eurodisco rhythms: synthesisers used to generate not pristine, hygienic textures, but poisonous, noisome filth; Burroughs' cut-up technique applied to found voices. But they are redeemed, renewed, by the sheer saturated intensity of their application. The beat can barely make its way through the congestion, the concatenation of impacted gristle, blistered and smeared surfaces, swarf, funk dregs. Cevi Key's voice is extraordinary, suggesting expectoration, haemorrhage and self-immolation all at once.

The Age of Chance are also aiming for a noise/funk collision. But where Skinny Puppy is gratuitous, inconsequential — and *luxuriates* in the voluptuousness and aggravation of sound itself — Age of Chance are one of those groups who make the mistake of starting with a theory and then attempting to live it out. Granted, they have a good point to make; their covers of Prince's 'Kiss' and The Trammps' 'Disco Inferno' on *Crush Collision* (Fon) are pointed gestures against the introversion and anti-disco prejudice of the inbred indie scene. They want to evangelise for the adventurousness and hardness of modern black pop. But outside this indie context, the songs lose their polemical meaning; are, at best, only mildly amusing novelty records; at worst, juiceless travesties of the sublime originals. Nonetheless, thanks to a knack for slogans and a corporate image and demeanour that suggest intensive immersion in Positive Thinking and assertiveness training, they've managed to blag themselves the status of an Event; winning, in the process, a small chart hit and a contract with Virgin.

Their music is a case of rhetoric triumphing over substance. Fibres of meaning interpenetrate every strand of sound, so that the experience reaches us already placed in a general scheme, overdetermined and thus domesticated. Oblivion (the ecstatic obliteration of meaning) is forestalled because we are constantly made aware that the song is a statement, a *reaction against*. In themselves, Age of Chance are neither exotic figures nor superior technicians. But then they subscribe to the widely-held, punk-descended view that 'attitude' is far more important than talent. Attitude means brazenness, the will to power, to bigotry. Attitude usually boils down to — all mouth and no trousers.

The funny thing is that black pop — devoid of theory, operating outside the rock press discourses that generate scams like Age of Chance — is throwing up music that parallels and exceeds the ambitions of avant-funk. Hip hop is impelled forward only by its dynamic towards greater impact — heavier beats, more daring and alarming cut-ups, new noise quotients. Take **Salt-N-Pepa**'s *Hot, Cool and Vicious* (Next Plateau). Producer Herbie Luv Bug constructs the music by 'sampling' from a variety of 'old school' grooves and breaks. Wholly inconsistent styles and ambiences, plucked from random points throughout pop history, are bolted together (*just* like Frankenstein's neck, in fact). The effect is psychedelic, because any kind of narrative continuity, focus or identity is fragmented, dissipated — affording the listener plenty

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WORK IN PROGRESS

Mysteries of the Aspidistra Cult

Naseem Khan

FIFTY YEARS AGO, in the Letters column of the *New Statesman*, it was just an idea. Fifty years on, it's a vast, neon-lit archive stretching way up to the roof: stacks and stacks of boxes full of ephemera; diaries and letters; cuttings and questionnaires; collections of views gathered in the workplace, in the pub, on the beach, on the Clapham omnibus; about anything from war jokes and the German invasion to George Formby and astrology.

Mass Observation — an inappositely Big Brother name — has this year reached its golden jubilee. The wonder is that there has not been more brouhaha. The Mass Observation exhibition, collected by Rod Varley, is about the sum of it, and that's due to be seen only in Brentford and Bolton. And yet, looking back, the venture preshadowed a range of current concerns and fuelled later perceptions.

The instigating letter, published on 30 January 1937, came from Tom Harrisson, Humphrey Jennings and Charles Madge (the first an anthropologist, the second a poet and journalist) and detailed, for the first time, a programme of investigation to be undertaken ultimately — or so the three fervently hoped — by 5,000 voluntary observers. It would turn the methods of anthropology from foreign cultures onto British cultures and customs, which it would then document and publish. Harrisson and Co suggested a number of concerns: behaviour of people at war memorials, shouts and gestures of motorists, the aspidistra cult, anti-semitism, female taboos against eating, the private life of midwives, all were on the list.

However bizarre that list sounds now, the point was not voyeurism or compulsive collectoritis. The project had impeccable intentions. 'It does not set out in quest of truth or facts for their own sake, or for the sake of an intellectual minority, but aims at exposing them in simple terms to all observers, so that their environment may be understood and thus constantly transformed . . . The foisting on the mass of ideals or ideas developed by men apart from it, irrespective of its capacities, causes mass misery, intellectual despair and an international shambles.' The gulf between the so-called common man and the policy-makers angered all three founders of Mass Observation. 'Tell Us the Facts, Mr Baldwin!' shouted the *Daily Mirror*. 'The Nation insists on knowing . . .' But which nation? Harrisson and his colleagues asked. The nation of journalists and of newspaper proprietors?

Only by going out and about — be it with 50 or 5,000 volunteers — could a claim to speak for the nation be countered or modified (or, maybe, supported). And this is exactly what the Mass Observationists did. Directed by Madge and Harrisson, they gauged and recorded popular opinion and reflected popular pleasures, whether on the beaches of Blackpool or the streets of Lambeth. Its books (among much else) documented disparity. The Munich Agreement, as *Britain by Mass Observation* pointed out, was met by the Press 'shouting that the country was solid pro-Chamberlain': 'in fact, even at its top point, he never scored more than 54%.'

'Almost all of them thought, "Well . . . it[the Munich Agreement]'s a bit funny,"' recalled Celia Fremlin at the current exhibition's opening. She's now in her 70s but one of Harrisson's original investigators. 'They thought Chamberlain was a bit childish to accept this man's word.' Ms Fremlin was not long down from Oxford when Harrisson recruited her. He'd seen her first book, *Seven Chars of Chelsea*, that detailed her experience in various types of skivvying, and thought, 'Ah ha!' Out he sent her, and others, with questionnaires — usually four or five questions on each — and instructions to find 20 people, half of them men, half of them women, half of them young, half of them old. 'At that stage, we didn't think too much about class.'

Although the questions were the trigger ('Do you think there's going to be a war?' for instance), it was the quality of the responses, rather than the responses *per se*, that was the real point: opinions, prejudices, myths, dreams, ambitions, fears. Taken together, subject by subject, they undoubtedly form an extraordinary record of social and cultural changes in Britain in the Thirties and Forties. The influence of the Mass Observation books and their attitudes (reinforced by other contemporary movements) has led to developments as diverse as market research, political polling and the oral-history and community-arts movements of today.

The exhibition records some of Mass Observation's concerns. It refers in passing to classmates (so to speak) like the Left Book Club. It details ramifications: *Picture Post*, for instance, is there with a series on the Birth of a Dance ('. . a dance is born from the effort of many people'). It also tentatively indicates modern-day applications.

For Mass Observation is not a closed archive. It's a continuing process — even though, says Professor David Pocock, the Director of the Archive, now at Sussex University, the emphasis has changed. Reflecting 'a shift in social science, without being too pretentious about it'. MO has moved from the apparently objective to the openly subjective, ironing out in the process the obvious flaws of the older model. Despite other developments (a greater access to the media and greater diversification) Pocock argues that Mass Observation still has a unique role. Other reflections, he says, tend to be fragmentary; MO's archive records broad change — in perceptions, for example, of the Falklands War. 'Where else could you find the shifts of public opinion, its comings and its goings?' The people's war continues, based in Sussex. □

jouissance, ecstatic confusion.

The Skinny Boys' *Weightless* (Warlock) takes a different route to oblivion — concussion. Drum machine, human beatbox and scratch are used to make noise as mindmangling as that produced by avant-garde groups like Test Dept or Einsturzende Neubaten. 'Feed Us The Beat' actually sounds like Black Sabbath.

And hip hop can comfortably match avant-funk in psychic extremity. Female duo Salt-N-Pepa practically trip out on 'attitude'; their fantasies of triumph and revenge make Age of Chance look like milksops. (Their riposte to rappers who 'bite', i.e. copy, their style is a promise to 'burn you and leave your ashes smoking'!). Where avant-funk enacts a theatre of psychosis, hip hop seems vertiginously close to its reality, possessed by the kind of predatory, paranoid self induced by drugs like PCP (a.k.a. angeldust).

Skinny Boys and Skinny Puppy are signals that hip hop and avant-funk are on the brink of total seizure, the point at which dance music snarls up beyond any functional utility. B-Boys no longer dance to hip hop, they stand, inert, arms folded across the chest, head tilted, gaze supercilious. And they nod their heads slightly to the beat. How long before the return of wigged-out catatonia? □

ART

Little boxes

John Spurling

British Art in the 20th Century: The Modern Movement
RA

LAST WINTER'S EXHIBITION of German 20th-century art at the RA was irritating for the way it tried to give legitimacy to a dubious bunch of contemporary artists, in the final galleries, by attaching them to the big fellows earlier on. *British Art in the 20th Century* has that fault, too, but whereas the German show at least did justice to the Expressionists, this exhibition does little justice to the much more multifarious and unclassifiable nature of British art.

A few artists — Epstein, Wyndham Lewis, Paul Nash and David Bomberg — are well served, with works appearing at different periods in different company and giving at least an impression of their scope and quality. But what is good for these four is precisely what's bad for nearly every other artist. The bureaucratic art-historical boxes into which the whole show is confined ensure that most artists appear as single captured specimens, representatives of British Surrealism or Constructivism or Sixties' Abstraction or Pop, rather than as the makers of self-sufficient visual objects in a variety of modes, moods and historical contexts. British art this century has often been exhilarating, ambitious and unexpected; here its practitioners have been reduced to a list of art-historical claimants — and, even then, half the legitimate claimants have been spurned.

But I'm less concerned with who has been left out — some of the omissions have been included in a gently reproachful small show called *Salon des*

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Refusés at the new Albermarle Gallery — than with what has been put in and how it has been put in. Henry Moore, one of the greatest innovators of the period, has rightly been given a gallery to himself in which the spread of work across his career allows some recognition of his full identity as an artist. But two of our other great innovators — Nicholson and Hepworth — are not only shut up in one room together and treated as if they had never developed beyond something called 'Towards Constructivism', but are made to share the room with four other artists, including a token pair of British 'Towards Surrealists'. Walking through the exhibition one sometimes wonders whether the organisers ever actually looked at what they were choosing or only ticked it off on their lists.

But there's more behind the show than just half-sightedness. It is, I suspect, like the German show, a deliberate attempt to palm off on a presumedly ignorant public a programme for British art this century. Oddly enough, considering its venue, it's not at all an Academy programme, but closer to what one might term Museum or State Taste: Hayward crossed with Tate. To judge by their pride of place in the grand central gallery, the programme's climax arrives with the 'School of London': Bacon, Freud, Auerbach, Kossoff and Andrews. In their midst — Hector surrounded by Achilles' Myrmidons — are three big abstract constructions, including the magnificent 'Prairie' by Anthony Caro. Perhaps the organisers hoped that here, in the heart of the Royal Academy, British Art's heroic attempts to further the Modern Movement — the ostensible theme of the show — would finally be seen to go down to a defeat as signal as Hector's.

The result is more like a draw: both parties are more or less neutralised. But whether you rate the 'School of London' highly or not, there is certainly no justification for considering them more central, more magisterial, more innovative, more modern, more British even than, for instance, Riley (filed away in a ridiculously inadequate box for 'Sixties' Abstraction' with two paintings that barely use colour) or Caulfield (pickled under 'Pop' with one very small early work) or Hoyland (one large Sixties' painting) or Clough, Huxley, Kneale, Sandle, Frink, who are left out altogether.

The fact is that it is the figurative strand in British art that the organisers are backing. Hence the wall-to-wall Gertlers and Robertses, the demotion of lyrical abstractionists such as Hepworth and Nicholson, the almost total neglect of Surrealism and Constructivism, the playing down of the passionate landscape element in both abstract and figurative British art this century, the setting up of Sickert in his muddy phase as the Ur-father of British modern art and the particular emphasis on Bomberg (who taught both Auerbach and Kossoff). And since the climax has been reached with the 'School of London' there is nowhere else to go afterwards but into the shallows of contemporary kitsch, with large works by such winners of the Tate's miserable Turner prize as Malcolm Morley and Gilbert and George and three jokey animal sculptures by Barry Flanagan who must, from his popularity with the arbiters of Museum Taste, be due to win the Turner this year or next.

For those who think that British 20th-century art never amounted to much anyway, this is the show to confirm their contempt and ignorance; for the rest of us it's a disaster. Unfortunately we're exporting the disaster to Stuttgart in the spring. I beg the Germans not to believe the half of it, any more than we believed the half of what was put before us as their 20th-century art. □

TELEVISION

Hooked

Hugo Williams

THERE SEEMED to be some extremely close acting going on between the handsome, steady-gazing Syvestra Le Tousel and the beautiful, willowy Michael Maloney in Anne Devlin's **Naming the Names** (BBC2), her highly personal analysis of the Irish troubles. Finn (Le Tousel) has been picked up by the police following the murder of a judge's son she has been seeing. She is only too ready to talk about her personal life — indeed she has an urgent need to do so — but when asked to name names she reels off those of the Belfast streets near where she lives, a random but frightening geography lesson calling a whole century's empire-building into the witness box and leaving her mundane inquisitor out of his depth.

The story is revealed in flashback from this inquisition: Finn's inevitable sad politicisation is described in terms of her daily life — she and her grandmother are fire-bombed out of house and street by Loyalists who seem to be backed up by UDR armoured cars — and her own developing sexuality. Her lovers are the instruments of this development, both British as it happens; first an opportunistic reporter who believes only what he writes and cannot cope with her nervous breakdown; then the fatal attachment to the innocent young student (Maloney), whom she turns into a sectarian victim when he fails to ring her for three weeks, although Maloney's sinister charm seemed to be doing its best to justify her deed.

Unlike last week's East Anglian venture, the film is of the modern kind, full of fast-moving detail which believes in leaving the plot to take care of itself. This is the only sensible way to treat plots in such ambiguous territory. Devlin seems to understand both people and history; or, rather, she makes no distinction. Le Tousel, by keeping her fierce blue eyes wide open and looking history bang in the face, gives the subtle and cynical overview a horrifying veracity; that in the end history is a personal matter which will be resolved not by armies and inquisitors, but by the people who have to live in those streets named after long-lost battles and outposts when their names come home to roost in them.

There are various effective set-pieces, none more painful than the slow, almost neighbourly fire-bombing of Finn and her grandmother's little terraced house. The granny dies and returns to haunt Finn with an outstretched arm Finn can neither grasp nor relinquish. That is only one of the many graphic strokes which would seem to have been long in the brewing.

In a sense there is nothing new about literary videos. The film of the book always sold copies, not least of the book of the film. TV will plunder anything, often using a book's publication date as a sort of imaginary hook, or else, if it's one of their own publications, making a hook of it themselves. They don't usually play up the publication date, but if you look in the small print you can usually send off for it somewhere. The BBC has pre-publicised countless commercial packages using our money, from Dud 'n' Pete 'n' Mel 'n' Griff 'n' Rowan's 97 contract-fillers to all those wildlife and science manuals from names you know better than I do. There's a book that sorts out the background waffle from the foreground chit-chat on **The State of the Art** (C4). There is another relating to the fine five-part **Seventy Summers** (BBC2), an engaging and literate record of a West Country farm by Tony Harman, who has farmed the land for half a century. There should certainly be a book of Martin Chambi's Thirties photographs of Peru following Paul Yule's magnificent re-creation of the Peruvian Indian's world on **Arena** (BBC2), though I could find no trace of its announcement in the *Radio Times* or the *Observer Magazine* preview. An openly literary programme like **Bookmark** (BBC2) obviously tries not to look like a plug, but last week's absorbing *African Voices*, about the exiled and banned Somali novelist Nuruddin Farah and the ex-gangster poet from South Africa Don Mattera, couldn't help but acknowledge the former's acclaimed novel *Maps*.

All these are commercial tie-ups of one kind or another, but the straightforward, product-oriented commercial video is a novelty in the thankless world of book publishing, according to Paula Yates, who introduced Tama Janowitz's video for her *Slaves of New York* (Picador) on **The Tube** (C4) last week. Tama is — how should one put this without sounding non-sexist? — a dish. And so a video of her reclining on a chaise longue in flimsy garments and dining out with Andy Warhol must have seemed like a sound business proposition to her publishers. On the other hand, Warhol has bought five of her stories for his first film for ten years, so perhaps this was only in the broadest sense a literary video. I'll leave you to work out the state of its art. □

MUSIC

Cosmetic surgery

Andrew Clements

Tosca
Coliseum

AFTER SO MANY SEASONS of consistent enterprise no one should begrudge English National Opera a spell of consolidation. The books have to be balanced and the company needs to acquire some durable stagings of popular repertory operas that can be frequently revived to full houses. Hence, since September last, new productions of *The Mikado, Cav* and *Pag* and *Carmen*, and now, still hot from its *succès de scandale* at the Florence Teatro Communale, Jonathan Miller's version of *Tosca*.

The house that presented both *Doktor Faust* and *The Mask of Orpheus* in 1986 has no reason to

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feel guilty about pandering to the box-office for a while and the productions of the staples have been by no means conventional. With a *Mikado* transplanted to Twenties flapper-land and a *Carmen* fetched up in the squatter camps of some Central American republic, ENO has tried to slant its approach — enough, anyway, to provoke the ire of the *Daily Telegraph* which lavished precious feature space on an attack on its production policy.

If all the criticism is only coming from that particular quarter then things can't be too bad. But there does seem to be a discernible tendency towards what might be called the location school of opera production at the Coliseum at the moment, the kind of thinking which maintains that, if the context of an opera can be comprehensively changed, that is a sufficient act of reinterpretation in itself and nothing further need be done. And Miller's *Tosca* demonstrates the shortcomings of that approach most eloquently.

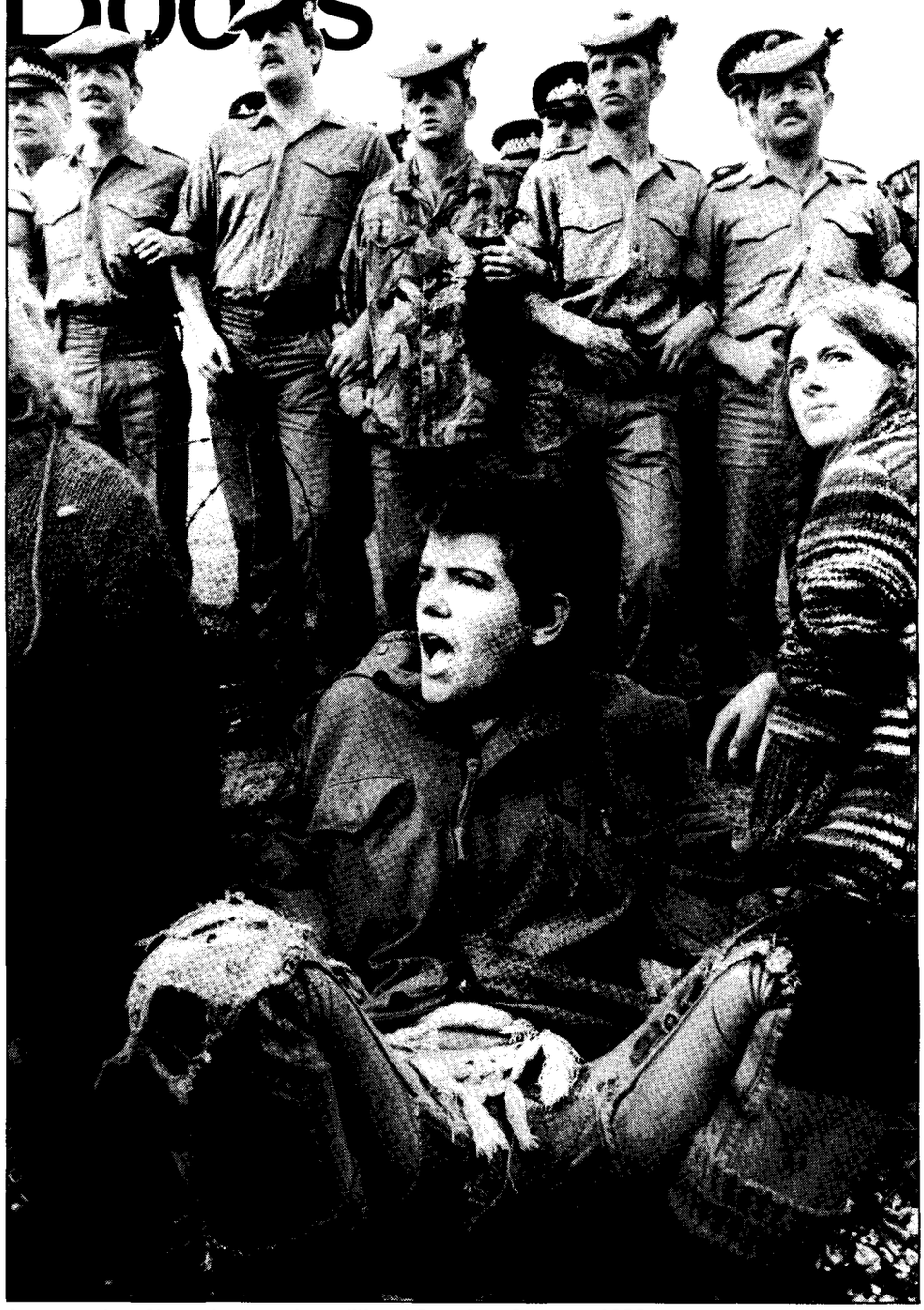
It's not a new idea to transplant the action of Puccini's tawdry masterpiece from the Rome of 1800 to fascist Italy in the 20th century; Scottish Opera did so with moderate success a few years ago. Miller's new locale is however even more specific: he places it precisely in the early months of 1944, when the Allies had established a beach-head at Anzio and the Nazis took ever more brutal reprisals upon the resistance and its sympathisers in Rome. With a minimum of changes the libretto fits well; only a few details jar. And representing Angelotti and Cavaradossi as members of the resistance, and Scarpia as head of Mussolini's police, works effectively too; the credibility of the characterisations is perfectly sustainable.

But at that point Miller's reading of the opera ends. He has given it a fresh, consistent packaging; Stefanos Lazaridis has designed a massive, spectacular set. It's easy to see how the whole thing caused such offence in Florence, where memories of fascist brutality must still be vivid. But the production tells us nothing new about *Tosca*. By asserting that emotional and physical brutality are timeless and perennial, it offers no insights; the changes become entirely cosmetic.

That would not in itself be a disadvantage had Miller obtained properly focused characterisations and welded action to music in a scrupulous and musical way. Puccini is at pains to connect the drama to his music as lucidly as possible; his themes all signify something. Because this production chooses to ignore that level of the drama, or rather to blur its effectiveness, the opera does not move as easily and pointfully as it should. One straightforward example: Scarpia's appearance at the end of the first act is signalled by Puccini by the massive chords that open the opera. Here, because of the way in which Miller has organised his entry, Scarpia is seen barging his way on to the stage several seconds before the chords are heard in the orchestra, so that the effect of Puccini's thematicism is totally lost.

The opera is littered with such miscalculations. The pace of the evening is not helped by dull-edged conducting (Jan Lathan-Koenig) and a po-faced Cavaradossi (Eduardo Alvares). The bright spots are Neil Howlett's sleek reptilian Scarpia and Josephine Barstow's utterly credible Tosca, providing the depth of character so signally missing elsewhere. □

Books



Andrew Wiard/Report

An expression of innately womanly qualities at Greenham Common, 1983

FEMINISM

Opinion of difference

Alison Hennegan

Is the Future Female? Troubled Thoughts on Contemporary Feminism
LYNNE SEGAL *Virago* £4.95

LYNNE SEGAL HERE OFFERS her own acknowledgedly personal account of the last 15 years of British feminism and explains why it gives her cause for optimism and grave disquiet. What brings disquiet is the increasing acceptance by many feminists of essentialist ideas about innate — and therefore, by implication, unchangeable — differences between men and women.

The acceptance, she argues, distinguishes feminist theory of the Eighties from the previous decade's, in which innate differences between the sexes were usually minimised or denied: the persistent fact of men's power over women was then explained largely in terms of nurture rather than nature: environment; learnt behaviour; stereotyping; political, social and economic inequities built into the legislative, bureaucratic and cultural fabric of our society. Essentialism was decried, indeed identified as the chief weapon in the Enemy's armoury since it made women's subordination inevitable and unalterable, part of

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a permanently fixed 'natural' order.

But from the mid-Seventies onwards a stream of influential feminist books (often, but by no means always, emanating from the USA) has argued that women most certainly are different from men, and that therein lies their superiority. In effect, men are innately vicious, women innately virtuous. The language echoes other earlier, predominantly anti-woman, world views; and, if you find that fact disturbing, so you damn well should, she argues. Some aspects of contemporary feminist thinking seem quite as dangerous to her as that of openly declared enemies. She identifies and combats those aspects as they express themselves in a number of key works and areas.

Work such as Mary Daly's insists on a specifically female spirituality from which most women, so Daly believes, are nevertheless excluded. Dale Spender's work on and belief in 'man made language' is both the product and part-creator of a belief in male and female spheres as rigidly separate as any Victorian patriarch could wish. The increasingly influential work of feminist academics drawn to Lacanian theories of language has helped to give credibility to a system which has at its centre polarised notions of gender which seem to condemn the feminine to a world lived in eternal silence on the margins of culture. (I may have got that last sentence wrong: I am one of the many eager but non-academic feminist readers who, as Lynne Segal so rightly says, were first bewildered by, then alienated from much academic feminist writing.) Much recent work (most notably Andrea Dworkin's and Susan Griffin's) on rape, pornography and violence against women takes the innately destructive and aggressive nature of male sexuality as a given. Feminism in the early Seventies often revealed a mixture of impatience and embarrassment at the specifically female physical processes of menstruation, pregnancy, birth and lactation. Later feminist works have gloried in them and have developed a near-mystical belief in the spiritual and moral power endowed by motherhood. By implication men are and always must be incomplete in this regard. Women's remarkable part in current anti-nuclear campaigning is often seen — by both the participants themselves and their male supporters — as an expression of innately womanly qualities pitted against male ones: life against death, the life-givers against the life-takers.

Gutting and synthesising an impressively diverse array of recent books and articles, Lynne Segal traces the sexual essentialism underlying works on therapy, psychoanalysis, philosophy, linguistics, childbirth and childcare, war, race and sexuality itself. In the main she does it as fairly as she can, giving due acknowledgement and thanks for the kernel of useful insight invariably offered by even the most essentialist writer; occasionally she lapses and bites old enemies hard.

Essentialism has unfortunate antecedents and its irresistible appeal to fascist and totalitarian temperaments is well documented. For that reason alone Lynne Segal would find alarming its present resurgence in feminist thought, but other things about it alarm her more. Its emphasis on tightly circumscribed, interior worlds militates against outwardly directed political action, for instance. It implicitly suggests that political alliances with men are treacherous to other women and anyway doomed to failure. The emphasis on a transhistorical, cross-cultural 'female experience' ignores differences between women arising from race, class or religion. Worst of all, perhaps, it induces despair and encourages a retreat back to those traditionally 'female' patterns of masochistic resignation and defeat.

Cause for disquiet, indeed. Her optimism springs from the seemingly contradictory and growing part played by women, working with or alongside men, in innumerable struggles during the early and mid-Eighties: the 'Fares Fare' campaign in London; GLC involvement on many fronts; the Miners' Strike. These and many others she lists at the beginning of her final chapter which calls urgently for a socialism transformed by feminism, and a feminism committed to the transformation of socialism.

My problem with this book is that it seems to me to duck the implications of a fact which Lynne Segal herself accepts: in all societies known to us women have been subordinate to men. To me, at least, this suggests strongly that there is something essentially problematic in the relations between men and women, even though the problem manifests itself in different forms in different times and places. From where I stand the root of the problem seems to be the fact that many women love and desire the gender which oppresses them. (I'm not accusing, just observing.) To continue to love the oppressor raises a host of questions which Lynne Segal doesn't really face. (Interestingly her chapter on sexuality contains some of her most delightfully direct writing *and* some of the most opaque.) The battle to free oneself from oppression by the thing one also loves and desires is, as many women have testified, agonising. Some suspect it to be impossible. I'm sure it is. To Lynne Segal that may seem evidence of precisely that despair which she finds in the recent feminist works she analyses. To me it seems a necessary recognition of the odds against us. But it doesn't mean giving up the struggle: there has never been any real contradiction between expecting the worst whilst fighting for the best. □

PAPERBACKS

Now for something completely . . .

Boyd Tonkin

'I HAVE NEVER seen a class so deeply demoralised, so incurably debased by selfishness, so corroded within, so incapable of progress, as the English bourgeoisie.' No, not the DTI inspector after a long day at Guinness, but part of Engels' thundering finale to **The Condition of the Working Class in England** (Penguin Classics, £3.95).

Among the textile barons of Manchester in 1844 Engels moved like a discreet avenging angel. He was foreign, angry, alone and very young: 24 when the book was written. Its subsequent status as a gospel of the International has helped mask the fury and zest of the writing.

With the eye of an impassioned alien he stalks the slums and trawls the government records. Direct observation merges with official data to uncover a swamp of misery whose muck passed unnoticed by its brassy profiteers. As one of Engels' manufacturing friends replied to his indictment at a Manchester street-corner: 'And yet there is a great deal of money made here; good morning, sir.'

A classic of reportage, the study also reads as a kind of detective story. Whodunnit? Not a handful of greedy men, but industrial capital and the class relations it sustains. Racing across the landscape and mindscape of New York in the years around the First World War, John Dos Passos' panoramic novel **Manhattan Transfer** (Penguin, £4.95) reaches the same diagnosis. 'The day we stop believing in money and property, it will be like a dream when we wake up,' reflects one of the rebels and drifters who seek to make sense of the pulverised solitude of city life, what Engels called 'the world of atoms'. Trying to touch 'the centre

CAMBRIDGE

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'... it was Gerald Brenan who gave use the real context (of the Spanish Civil War) enabling readers to see Spain in wider terms than as an ideological contest culminating in physical battles on an epic scale, a kind of proving ground for Europe... *The Spanish Labyrinth*, Brenan's exploration into history, culture and society, remains the key text for English language readers in understanding the how and the why. *The Literature of the Spanish Peoples* was an important book. While *South from Granada*, Brenan's first essay in autobiography, offered a picture – seen from a position of deep and sympathetic understanding – of older ways and immemorable values ... (his) dedication, combined with his intelligence and insight, has produced a handful of books which have every right to live on for the foreseeable future.'

From Adam Hopkins' tribute to Brenan, in The Guardian

Cambridge University Press
The Edinburgh Building, Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 2RU, England

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of things' in 1925, Dos Passos produces a breathless narrative stuffed with cross-cuts and collages.

Perhaps this kaleidoscopic method, as Lukacs said long ago, merely imitates the happenstance of the 'unreal cities' of modernism, rather than standing at a critical distance. At the novel's close, news reporter Jimmy Herf gives up the toil of understanding. Abandoning the urban overload of signs, he leaves New York for the simpler pastoral of the open road.

Dos Passos wrestles with the democratic novelist's problem of how to grant equal weight to a multitude of voices and perspectives without courting chaos. Julia Voznesenskaya's more drastic solution in **The Women's Decameron** (Methuen, £3.95, trans. W.B. Linton) is to steal the liberating formality of mediaeval story-telling. As in Boccaccio, ten characters tell a tale on each of ten successive days.

Here, the narrators are mothers quarantined in a Leningrad maternity ward. Speaking of first love or rape, of jealousy or revenge, they tell of the casual brutalities of Soviet men and of the system that rewards them. This is history from below, its terrors softened by the laughter of a shared predicament. Stupidity and inertia open up fissures in the fabric of male and state power. A woman with her wits about her can crawl through these rents to find pleasure and security.

Voznesenskaya offers a full meal; Jean Cocteau's **The Miscreant** (Brilliance, £3.95, trans. Dorothy Williams) the frilliest of canapés. Small but exquisitely formed, this 1921 novella often sounds as if Proust had re-written a slice of *A la recherche* . . . as an easy reader for depraved ten-year-olds. Precocious Jacques falls in and out of love with the fickle Germaine in a Paris exotically peopled by Turkish bankers, Oxford athletes and omni-sexual actresses. Behind the volleys of epigrams Jacques glimpses a hierarchy of erotic suffering, ruled by an impervious 'diamond race which cuts through the men of glass'.

Cocteau's women tend to diamond; his men to glass. In **Lawrence's Men and Women** (Paladin, £3.95) Sheila MacLeod pursues the premise that 'for Lawrence, men are the weaker sex, however strong their muscles or robust their intellects'. Miraculously, she manages to make this well-chewed topic into the focus of a fresh, unhackneyed commentary on all the major fiction, including *Mr Noon* and the three versions of *Lady Chatterley*. She shrewdly sees that the very choice of fiction implies a surrender of mastery, since 'to write a novel is to admit that what concerns you most deeply is neither self-evident nor susceptible to proof'. Hence Lawrence, as a writer, can drift into an intimacy with the aspirations of his women that the preacher's voice has to overrule with those too-familiar chunks of phallic ideology.

Chips on his shoulder and *angst* in his loins, the old beast gets a good deal more credit than he sometimes deserves from Sheila MacLeod. Generous to his generosities, she had a keen nose for the cruelties that Lawrence used to cloak his sexual panic. Aptly enough, the cover illustration shows the 'mother's son' togged up in a fetching white frock.

'We are getting sillier by the minute,' declares Neil Postman in the course of his diatribe against US television culture, **Amusing Ourselves to Death** (Methuen, £3.95). Well, Professor Postman, speak for yourself. His cosy apocalypse does seem a bit like a typographic Johnny Carson show: culture-critics' clichés from the 1950s, small swipes at straw persons in the media, glib resumés of hard thoughts and a cast of clapped-out has-beens: Aldous Huxley, Marshall McLuhan, Roland Barthes, Northrop Frye, *et al*. This argument sounded trite when Ronald Reagan still made fridge commercials. What does Postman recommend to turn the tide of trivia? Subversive parody (that means Monty Python) and school courses in media studies. At one point he claims that TV pioneered the rhetoric of 'Now . . . this', whereby disconnected items are strung together with fatuous conjunctions. He obviously never reads book reviews. □

FICTION

Eros and Thanatos

Harriett Gilbert

Spanking the Maid
ROBERT COOVER *Heinemann* £8.95

WOMEN'S BOTTOMS ARE of more than passing interest to Rober Coover. In *Gerald's Party* — the novel that he wrote after this one, but which managed to reach this side of the Atlantic a year ago — there was a scene in which the male narrator wiped a woman's bottom, soaped it, dried it, oiled it and dressed it in paper knickers over something like 17 pages. (There were, it is true, digressions, but several of *those* concerned spanking.) The sceptic might conclude that Coover is stuck in the tum-titty-bum stage of childhood — if able, on account of a college education, to present his obsession more ingeniously.

The sceptic mightn't be altogether wrong. Coover does return, again and again, with horrified fascination, to those aspects of human biology that parents would rather their children ignored or at least didn't have to go *on* about. And a child's obsessiveness marks Coover's writing style, too: a determination to describe things *right*; a near-incantatory use of repetition; a pursuit of the sound and resonance of words to their surrealistic conclusion. His prose is jabbed by parentheses which correct, qualify or offer alternatives to what's going on all around them, while associations are leapt on at the drop of an assonance or *double entendre*.

'He awakes from a dream (something about utility, or futility, and a teacher he once had who, when he whipped his students, called it his "civil service"), still wrapped in darkness and hugged close to the sweet breast of the night . . .' So begins the narrative of the master in *Spanking the Maid*. His servant's perspective alternates with his, as the two of them enact, and enact, and enact, the rituals of early morning: the opening of the master's bedroom windows; his shower, shave and shit; the maid's sweeping. Oh, yes, and the spanking: the equally ritualised punishment to which, despite the maid's every endeavour, some negligence or omission of hers will invariably lead the two of them.

Or *does* the maid try so hard to avoid it? That part of Coover that isn't a bum-fixated five-year-old is a skilled, intelligent and adult writer — one perfectly aware of the boy that he carries inside him — and among the novel's many manoeuvres is that by which we can never be sure of the maid's complicity, her motives; so that we are prevented from sinking into sado-masochistic involvement. Indeed, if pornography is that which arouses by pandering to people's most infantile belief — that objects, animals and humans exist in so far as they gratify us, no further — then *Spanking the Maid* is nowhere at all pornography. It is, on the contrary, a dexterous exposé of why pornography works. Its very construction — 'take one', 'take two', 'take three' of essentially the same scene — and its tone of brow-wrinkled concentration reveal how the search for total and totally simple sexual satisfaction is really sleepiness, desire for death, a desperate request for someone, somewhere, to give us permission to stop.

And if fetishistic sex is the novel's peg, its come-hither neon entrance sign, it is interwoven from the very beginning with other obsessive behaviour patterns: the pursuit of physical order, of course, in the face of dust, human movement, fly shit; but also the search, by both powerless and powerful, for an absolute code of conduct that will absolve us from having to think. □

FICTION

Papa and son

Adrianne Blue

The Garden of Eden
ERNEST HEMINGWAY *Hamish Hamilton* £9.95
The Lost Language of Cranes
DAVID LEAVITT *Viking* £10.95

SHAMEFUL, I KNOW, but I am a Hemingway fan. I am always prepared to give him the benefit of the doubt. No one can make you taste wine, feel the sun on naked skin, enjoy the 'blue and pleasant sea' like Papa can. But **The Garden of Eden**, fascinating though its theme is, does not serve Hemingway's memory well.

Nor is the failure his fault. Hemingway worked on the manuscript on and off for 15 years but never finished it. After his death in 1961, a 1,500-page manuscript was found among his papers. A New York editor has cut the manuscript to these 250 pages.

The editor seems to have left in descriptions of the simple good life wherever possible, too often in fact. It reads like parody in places. Whenever there is trouble with the narrative flow, a bottle of cool wine is uncorked and placed in the hero's hand.

What happens is this: a man and a woman are on a long, lazy honeymoon. He is getting bored and ready to write a new book, although he is still much in love. She is getting bored, too, but has no métier. She too is much in love. 'Is Madame also a writer?' the waiter asks. 'No,' she answers. 'Madame is a housewife.'

To amuse herself, Madame, Catherine, drives into Cannes and gets her hair cut boy-short and

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bleached nearly white. In bed later she says she is part boy and calls her husband, David, 'girl'. Hubbie goes along with the whole thing nervously. He begins to call his wife Devil.

> 'Do you like me as a girl?' she said very seriously and then smiled.
> 'Yes,' he said.
> 'That's good,' she said. 'I'm glad someone likes it because it's a god damned bore.'

Catherine wants them to be indistinguishable; both androgynous sprites. Hubbie gets his hair dyed to match hers. Hair is here, as ever in Hemingway, an information-packed emblem. In *Death in the Afternoon* the sign that depravity had won in the case of a young homosexual man was that 'the one who had said he would kill himself rather than go back in that room, had had his hair hennaed.'

Next Catherine picks up a beautiful young lesbian woman who, to oil the wheels of social intercourse, says, after a while, that she is in love with both of them. After one fuck with David, she is only in love with him. Now Catherine, crazy with unexpressed jealousy, burns some of his manuscripts and talks about his having lived on her money: two equally unforgivable actions, it seems. Displaced, bonkers, she takes the train away from them. David loves his new girl, who appreciates his talent and who is always ready for a swim or a meal or a fuck — whatever you want, David — when he has finished work.

There is no irony in their happy ending; though Papa, I think, would have covered himself with a pinprick of guilt.

I must admit that it seems to me that Catherine's main craziness was that she did not burn *all* of his manuscripts. But my quarrel with the novel is not on ideological grounds. It is that it fails to convince that in this case what is said to have happened did happen. How is it that the second 'girl', Marita, a self-possessed beauty who left one woman for another woman, wound up so quickly willing to submerge herself in this particular man? Wishful thinking, no? Emotionally, the book rings false.

Like Hemingway's last novel, David Leavitt's first novel, **The Lost Language of Cranes**, examines the parameters of sexual love. It is fascinating to see how much more has become mentionable in 25 years. When the Hemingway hero's new girl gifts him with fellatio, there is vague talk of belt buckles. By the time we get to Leavitt, who was born the year Hemingway killed himself, we see Eliot's 'springy, erect penis jutting out from his open pants'. Philip takes it in his mouth until 'thick, salty liquid squirted'. 'Respectfully, in spite of health warnings, Philip did what with other men he had never done: he swallowed.'

There is a fine scene in which Philip, an earnest middle-class young man about Manhattan, flinches when a distinguished Englishman of the older generation refers to another man as 'girl'. That sort of queening is strictly an English affectation, and it puts the reader and the young man off. The Englishman, as it happens, is Eliot's stepfather.

Leavitt's theme is how two generations of men, fathers and sons, live out their homosexuality. Philip's father denies his homosexual yearnings guiltily and lives for decades with an anguished, 'dirty' secret. But Philip and his friends are as soppy and romantic and complacent as Hemingway's young heterosexual lovers. Except for the distant spectre of Aids. The flaw of the book is that it reads as though mid-manuscript the author had remembered Aids and decided to pencil in a few references. But this may be unfair to say; does a novel about male homosexuality set in the present have to *focus* on Aids?

Among the cameo parts are two young lesbian women. The tall, seemingly butch, black intellectual is picked up by a white, delicate, well-dressed sales clerk when she goes shopping for a dress in Laura Ashley.

Leavitt has irony and skill; he is comfortable with his gay subject matter. He debuted with a fine collection of short stories *Family Dancing*. His novel is a more workmanlike job technically, bold chiefly in his description of men having sex together.

It is time to try something more. To experiment a little with form as well as with content. I think he can. I hope he will. □

AMERICA

Burying Trotsky

Anne Thompson

The Rise of the New York Intellectuals: *Partisan Review* and its Circle, 1934-1945
TERRY A. COONEY *Wisconsin* £23.75
American Writers and Radical Politics, 1900-39: Equivocal Commitments
ERIC HOMBERGER *Macmillan* £27.50

IN 1962, WILLIAM PHILLIPS, an editor of *Partisan Review*, was moved to give his version of 'What Happened in the 30s'. For the previous two decades, he noted, everyone had been trying to forget that radical period; now, with the failure of 'temperate' solutions, they were trying to remember. There are undoubtedly lessons for the Eighties also in the journeys of the 'New York Intellectuals' but it is in the nature of history, even recent history, that researchers engaged in extracting them interpret their material rather differently.

Partisan Review is perhaps the most famous and influential 'little magazine' in the USA and most of the group who came to be known as the New York Intellectuals moved in, and out, of its sphere in the Thirties, Forties and Fifties. Started in 1934 as an organ of the New York branch of the John Reed Club, the Communist Party's organisation of artists and intellectuals, by December 1937 it had become an 'independent' periodical with a Trotskyist orientation. By the late Forties, however, anti-Stalinism had become anti-Communism and a 1952 symposium signalled the cold-war editorial sympathy with 'Our Country, Our Culture'.

The first two decades of *PR*'s existence apparently reflect dramatic shifts of political allegiance and most participants, followed by many historians, have downplayed the links first with the Communist Party and then with Trotsky. Terry A. Cooney, in his highly researched **The Rise of the New York Intellectuals**, does not attempt to minimise the changes, but he does try to contextualise them and to emphasise an essential continuity. His central thesis is that a consistent set of values, which he designates 'cosmopolitanism', motivated the group; their shifts in political allegiance were part of a constant search for a milieu in which these values could be realised.

Cosmopolitanism rejected • narrow 'particularisms of nationality, race, religion or philosophy', favouring ideas that were 'secular, scientific, rational, urban, international in spirit, intellectually sophisticated and broadly inclusive'. Reference to this value-set, Cooney asserts, enables us to understand the response of the group to their national identity, to themselves as 'outsiders' — most were first- or second-generation immigrants and Jewish — their relations to European culture, their politics, their aesthetics. Cosmopolitanism originated with the leaders of New York's Bohemia in the 1910s: with Randolph Bourne (whose term it was) and his call for a 'Trans-national America'; with Van Wyck Brooks and his attack on the dualism of 'high' and 'low brow' in American culture. The *PR* circle, Cooney argues, were searching for synthesis: a synthesis between theory and practice, consciousness and experience; between the 'Palefaces and the Redskins', in editor Philip Rahv's famous literary formulation. They were trying to assimilate the best of the European tradition and the 'native American' tradition.

While agreeing with Cooney that there are themes which manifested themselves in *PR* in different ways as its editors found affinity with different political positions, I feel he has overstated their consistency and the positive nature of the editors' *Americanism* prior to the late Forties. Another reading of the texts can as easily identify the central theme as a demand for 'cultural continuity' taken from Trotsky. Certainly, any analysis of the work of Rahv, Phillips and others in *PR* needs to give more consideration to the literary and political theory being debated in *International Literature, New Masses* and other magazines and party papers, in New York and Moscow, at the time.

Eric Homberger's **American Writers and Radical Politics** focuses on the work of Jack London, Upton Sinclair, John Reed, Edmund Wilson and the Ojectivist poets, but, in addition, there are two more general chapters on the pre-WW1 Greenwich Village intellectuals and the between-the-wars dominance of 'proletarian literature' and the JR Clubs. Here, he provides what is markedly undeveloped in Cooney's history: an analysis of the prevailing party line. As he emphasises, '. . . the experience of the left in American literature is scarcely comprehensible without a firm grasp of the ways in which Soviet literary policy was emulated'.

As an Appendix to Homberger's book, there is also a selection of Trotsky's correspondence with *PR*: a useful corrective to Cooney's insistence that a 'commitment to America' was the key value for the New York Intellectuals from the start. Most of the group *didn't* start as liberals: they constructed a *new* liberalism and *new* Americanism in a context of post-war US hegemony. □

Anne Thompson is currently researching Partisan Review. *She is a lecturer in Further Education at Waltham Forest College.*

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Tactical voting

Mary Georghiou, Prospective Parliamentary Candidate, Bristol West
Before consigning Labour to the dustbin in Bristol West (*NS* 30 Jan.) by twinning it neatly with Bristol North West, it might be as well to take a look at the anti-Thatcher arithmetic on the ground instead of just glancing at the 1983 general election figures.

Here in Bristol West we have more Labour councillors than Liberal ones; we have seen a move away from tactical voting in local elections since 1984; the Liberals are supporting Tory cuts on Avon county council and the Labour vote is very strong and motivated, reflecting real poverty, unemployment and unfit housing in the private rented sector which dominates many wards. Bristol West also contains St Paul's, which exhibits signs of stress as serious as any city district in the country. The *Newsnight* poll last June, which had Labour in second place, supported the notion that the Liberals had not even persuaded their own supporters that they had a good chance of winning, so instead of the Liberals squeezing the Labour vote, as they did in 1983, there is every chance of turning it the other way round. That is what we will be arguing. Second/third positions were not set in concrete in 1983 for all time.

For tactical voting to work in the numbers required it would need more than *New Statesman/Guardian* readers; candidates and local parties would need to agree which party had the best chance of beating the Tories and support the idea. Even then it could backfire. The Alliance is not monolithic. Tactical voting, with Liberal support for Labour, in Bristol North West might produce a result as it did in my district election last May, when the Liberals put up no fight, giving no refuge to anxious Conservatives who then drift back and produce a Tory victory.

Allan R. Biggar, Area Agent, Eastern Regional Liberal Party, Cambridge
In considering the 'tactical vote', there seems to be a simplistic tendency of the 'let's look at June 1983' approach to this question by the promoters of the tactical 100 and their hangers-on (who would be well advised to read their election law carefully). This is rather like making a decision about whether or not to buy Guinness shares on the basis of the 1983 annual report — useful information but not quite the full picture.

An illustration of constituencies where there has been a change in political fortunes since 1983 is Norwich North. General election vote: Tories 45, Labour 32, Alliance 23. QED tactical vote? In June 1983 Lord (then David) Ennals barely attempted to defend his seat, slipped Northwards from under him by the Boundary Commission. A constituency previously drawn entirely from wards in Norwich City was suddenly mapped 55/45 in favour of Broadland District Council wards (on which Labour has no representation). As Lord Ennals himself said of his 1983 defeat, 'The Boundary Commission did that'.

Overall, the May 1986 result, compared with May 1983, saw the Alliance up by nearly 11 per cent and the Tories down by just over ten per cent, with Labour set back by a fraction; if this pattern were to be repeated in a general election, all the parties would poll over 30 per cent (in line with an opinion poll in the constituency by Anglia TV last year). As the May 1987 Districts will show, however (if allowed to), the Alliance has grown still stronger in the area.

Cruel food

I.V.A. Barker, Stowmarket, Suffolk
While I do not doubt for a moment that Mr Davies of the International Fund for Animal Welfare would prefer Colin Spencer to boycott Korean restaurants, I would settle for a more consistent and less shifty approach from him in his attitudes to animal exploitation.

In his uneasy piece about Korean culinary practices, 'Seoul food' (*NS* 30 Jan.), he castigates the manner in which we intensively rear pigs and poultry in this country, vaguely dismisses meat-eating as unnecessary 'for several different reasons' (one specific reason might be illuminating), but, unbelievably, withdraws from condemning the boiling alive of cats for food, in a disingenuous outbreak of designer scruples, protesting prissily that he is unwilling to enter that 'somewhat delicate area of morality', namely the interference in 'another country's ethics and culture'.

It smacks to me at best of moral cowardice, and at worst the triumph of the epicure over the humanitarian, made doubly incredible in view of the moving and harrowing piece he wrote in *Guardian Food and Drink* (23 January) on the grim plight of the factory-farmed pig in this country. So moved was I by his piece that I cut it out and pinned it up on my notice board to remind me, daily and painfully, of what we allow others to do in our name. Surely, if only in the name of consistency, Mr Spencer owes the cats and dogs of Korea no less.

Such mealy-mouthed scrupulousness about the sanctity of others' cultural rights is nothing less than nauseating, in the cold stark light of what the exercise of those rights actually entails in terms of the most unspeakable and unnecessary animal suffering. I await with interest his spirited defence of the cultural benefits of suttee, female circumcision, head-hunting and cannibalism.

Wilfred Owen

Dr Jonathan Cutbill, London SE3
Dominic Hibberd obviously does not like my essay on Wilfred Owen but his appeal to academic objectivity is very dodgy (Letters 30 Jan.).

All biographers and critics have their own prejudices — social, religious, sexual or whatever. In a study of a gay man very different selections and interpretations of evidence may be made by a hostile straight, a sympathetic heterosexual attempting to relate to a different sexuality, an out gay or a homosexual scared of being recognised. Objectivity requires that the author's position is made plain to the reader. Andrew Hodges, in his biography of Alan Turing, has shown how simply this can be done. I challenge Hibberd to tell us as clearly as I have done where he is coming from.

Defence debate

Phil Braithwaite, King's Heath, Birmingham
It seems clear that CND and Labour are losing the defence argument. I believe this is because they have not openly challenged the myth that the Soviet Union can only be deterred by nuclear weapons. Instead they have tended to fall back on the fallacious argument that the British Bomb could not deter. Suggesting — incorrectly — that it could not be used independently to hit Soviet cities, they dismiss it as useless. Or they *misrepresent* deterrence theory — with phrases like 'using our nuclear weapons would mean national suicide' and 'they are neither realistic nor credible'.

This either distracts attention from the crucial question of whether the Soviet Union can only be deterred by nuclear weapons — or provides the pro-Bomb brigade with an excuse to attack us as illogical, emotional, dishonest and irresponsible (when really these words apply to them). And it reduces our general credibility with the public.

The anti-Bomb movement *must* accept that the Bomb *could* deter — though only in *one*, highly implausible, situation: in this, evil Soviet leaders contemplate all-out, annihilating, nuclear aggression against us. But, exercising rationality, they are held back — by the virtual inevitability of our retaliation *as we went down*.

Such retaliation could not be termed 'national suicide' — nor would it be irrational — *if we were being destroyed anyway*. Non-rational maybe, but certainly not against our self-interest, i.e. not irrational. Clearly, Soviet leaders would be foolish not to believe in it. It follows from this that if we thought Soviet leaders *were* capable of *this level* of nuclear aggression then we couldn't support unilateralism.

However, *no other level* of Soviet aggression on Britain, either low-level nuclear or conventional, could be deterred by 'our' Bomb: Britain would not fire its missiles at the USSR to stave off something less than annihilation, given

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the certainty of an annihilating Soviet response.

CND and Labour should therefore — as their first priority — present a realistic appraisal of exactly how the Soviet Union could threaten us. In this there would need to be an especially energetic challenge to the idea of the Soviet Union as a potential all-out nuclear aggressor. For this assumption represents *the only possible justification* for the British Bomb, but is an assumption for which there are no grounds.

Designer socialism

Lydia Kemery, Head of Dept. Fashion/Textiles, St Martin's School of Art, London WC2

Very, very loud cheers for Frances Morrell's essay (*NS* 23 Jan.). At last someone has guts enough to question that hoary shibboleth which somehow equates dreary exterior with 'more worthy' interior, when we all know how often the removal of a dreary exterior reveals even drearier contents.

Self-decoration is not a capitalist evil nor the work of the devil. In fact it is a form of visual statement that is most accessible to all, from the poorest to the richest. Its purpose is not simple vanity. More often it acts as a transmitter of messages, so that 'what you wear to the Revolution' may indeed be of prime importance. The wrong gear and your own side will shoot you. Fashion and decoration is not a question of money. To paint some ochre on your body requires only skill and imagination. The moral indignation and even fear that art and fashion have aroused in so many religious and political leaders through the centuries clearly demonstrates their importance. It is the one area where ordinary human beings can effect change, express their feelings about themselves and even demonstrate their political affiliations. In fashion choice may be exercised fairly freely and inexpensively. It doesn't cost very much to change your hair colour or to decorate your denim jacket.

This is not as frivolous as it may sound. For most people there is very little opportunity to change anything other than their appearance and most human beings crave some freedom, some change and a little bit of fun. Street fashion, rock and punk were not displays of conspicuous consumption. It was the creative drive inside the kids screaming to get out. When it did get out, it caused a global renewal of interest in UK fashion and UK designers. Internationally a UK-trained designer became a hot property and an OK feature of any company with design orientation. More importantly though, it has again become possible for the many talented, well qualified designers turned out by the unique British design education to flourish on home territory, thus creating work not only for themselves but also for those whom they employ. For when we all wear sober serviceable uniforms what will replace the fashion and textile market? What will the millions of workers who work in these industries DO? Not just in the UK but in India, Rumania, Portugal, Korea, Poland. The *not* wearing of fashionable clothing is not going magically to transfer the money that we would have spent on clothes to some other worthier cause.

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UNIVERSITY OF LONDON. The Ethel M. Wood Memorial Lecture entitled: 'Biblical Chronology: Legend or Science?' will be given by Professor James Barr, FBA (Regius Professor of Hebrew, University of Oxford) at the University of London, Senate House (Chancellor's Hall), Malet Street, London WC1 at 5.30 on Wednesday 4 March 1987. Admission free, without ticket. W7.5

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PROFESSIONAL MAN, separated, radical, artistic interests, 55, Guardian reader, Radio 3 listener, pianist, seeks sensitive, affectionate, caring woman, 30-45, for long-term relationship. South West. Box (07)4493. W7.29

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WED 18 FEB

'THE UK ECONOMY — Crisis or Recovery? General Meeting at 11 Dartmouth Street, London SW1 8.30 p.m. (please note not 7.30).

THURS 19 FEB

PUBLIC MEETING. *'Overseas Aid — Whose Responsibility?'* Speakers: **Tim Eggar MP,** Junior Foreign Office Minister, **Frank Judd,** Director of Oxfam, **John Davies** Labour PPC for Finchley & **James Skinner** Liberal PPC for Chipping Barnet. At St Mary's-at-Finchley Church Hall, Hendon Lane, N3, at 8 p.m.

CONFERENCE

TELEVISION & THE FAMILY: A New Agenda. 25/26 February. Conference at Institute of Education, London. Contact: Janet Willis, BFI on 01-437 4355 for details.

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TONY CROSLAND MEMORIAL LECTURE

7.30 p.m. Central Hall, Westminster, London SW1.

19 February 1987 is **10th Anniversary** of **Tony Crosland's death** and the Fabian Society will mark the Occasion by holding a Memorial Lecture to be given by

JOHN LLOYD

Editor of the *New Statesman* entitled:

'THE FUTURE of SOCIALISM'

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BACKCHAT

FIRST PERSON

Forever young

Jenny Turner

A SPECTRE has been haunting me of late: the spectre of 28. The spectre of 28 is that moment when the nice crinkly lines around your eyes meet a wind of change and stick there, permanently warm, hearty and condescending, as younger women constantly trot up to ask you for advice. The spectre of 28 spreads her wings wide and points her reflections in the direction of what has been. There is an angel like that, made of stone, perched on some Victorian merchant's grave in the middle of Glasgow's Necropolis. She peers way over to the Briggait, Glasgow's trendy and resolutely empty new shopping complex, and to the new Courthouse which, rumour has it, has 2,000 cells built into its basement.

The spectre of 28 is the fault of Amanda Sebestyen, who wrote a piece in *New Socialist* a couple of months back about being a graduate feminist. There is an optimum age for political activity, she argued, around 28. After that you settle down, get on with your job, have a child perhaps, or children, and reconsider feminism. So 28 is the high point of the professional feminist life. When you are seven, you reach the (English) age of reason and can read. When you are 14, you have spots, regular periods and sexuality. 21: a degree. 28+: a lifestyle. And doubts. It all makes perfect sense, for the mystic seven does in fact better describe the typical feminist *bildung* in which 16 and 18, the ages of legal entry into adult society, are bypassed because further education is (was) a certainty.

This luxurious extra experimental space was carved out by the hippy students of the Sixties and Seventies and made the women's movement possible. The limit of this space can be seen in these selfsame hippies' transformation into Y-ouknowwhats. The retreat into professing professionalism — or into *Spare Rib*'s 'feminist bedroom' — is probably sad for the history of the new left. What strikes me most, though, is that it's positively tragic for the under-28s, who are coming of age without feminist bedrooms, or professions, or certain educations.

I'm not putting down Amanda Sebestyen: her piece was good, and brave (if contentious) in its assertion that being 28+ (mature) means writing for *New Socialist* rather than *Spare Rib* (is this what post-feminism means? Though the profession of maturity looked odd, given that *New Socialist* is the only one of the *New S...* left magazines to make a tremendous effort to reach the youth market). She ably encapsulated a significant train of thought among feminists today. No doubt many women felt themselves reciprocated, felt that 'shock of recognition' as the first feminists used to call the comedy of coming to sisterhood. Others will not have done. This coming of age thing seems to mark a happy end — if you're 28.

If you're not very 28, tough. Graduate feminism, like all the professions, has a glut of people at the top who have been there since the profession developed in the Seventies. If the substance of maturity is professionalism and all that goes with it (a job, a house, professional friends, etc.) then many, many people are being made to exist in a state of prolonged adolescence. Or superfluity. You are superfluous so long as what you do is of interest to others only as a thing, a symptom, a mystique. This is more or less your average professional feminist's (or socialist's) interest in her or his noncoms.

While sorting out old magazines in my latest feminist bedroom, I came across the last year or so's tortured youth-style-socialism debates in the left-wing journals. Never once in all of it have the not-28s any subjectivity. It is all either problems associated with the having of a child, or considerations about the science of youth subculture, or strategies for the co-option of aforementioned young. Youth is considered as politically lumpen, an able consumer, frustrated producer, but without self-consciousness in the political sphere. The index to this lies with most of the left's persistently snooty approach to Militant in particular and Trotskyist and anarchist groups in general, groups which mobilise (and are mobilised by) young people's political energy. Young people's strategies have no validity, yet young people (as the articles always tend to conclude) are our *hope*.

Not a person or a citizen, but a hope. This attitude reminds me of a peculiar letter Dostoevsky sent to a friend while writing *The Brothers Karamazov*. 'I would like to ask you a great favour . . . I am soon to begin a new novel in which children are to take part . . . I am studying them and have been studying them all my life. I am very fond of them and I have some myself. But the observations of a man like you would be invaluable to me. And so please write to me everything you know about *children*.' These 'children' grew up to sack the Russian Orthodox churches in which Dostoevsky invested his faith and hope. For their fathers' sins and their mothers' ignorance.

Yet in a strange way Dostoevsky also saw the danger of manoeuvring the next generation into a position of permanent adolescence. In *The Devils*, the educated, political, privileged sons and daughters of the haute-bourgeoisie fester away in inactivity and the sort of pointless conspiracy born of a powerlessness that was led to expect better things. These young creatures orchestrate a riot, for which the dismissive term at that time was filibustering. To filibuster is to perform a political act outside the legitimate channels: that is, to act politically when politics itself refuses to recognise your authority.

Politics includes the organised, career left, those waged and superannuated persons who define themselves by their art, their journalism, their profession. Present-day filibusterers include whoever it is that throws things at Wapping, the Class War anarchists and the young of Militant (remember, the row over Militant was mostly about its illegality, not its beliefs).

For women, filibustering does not come easily. And feminism's imperative of sisterhood holds strong. The women's movement in Britain has yet to acknowledge ugly and oppressive differences within itself; we have yet to see women on marches with placards declaring 'Fuck Off Samantha' (name chosen at random) in the manner of 'Fuck Off Neil We Hate The Labour Party'. Yet women, the not-28s, continue to put up with complacent

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reassessments of their gender and sexuality pouring out of the academy and the London left media world. They continue giving hours and hours of unpaid labour to the grassroots organisations without which your graduate feminist would literally have no movement, and saving up dole money to buy these magazines and Viragos. Some make this alienation actual by getting in with the violent outside left or by dropping out of the world. Most merely internalise it as women have always done, from a sense of gratitude and loyalty.

This overgrown adolescent reminds me of Virginia Woolf's angel in the house. She might stay angelic, she might get fed up. I'd call this a crisis of feminism. If it isn't very visible it's because the spectre of 28 is sitting on her back. □

FOOD

Letting off steam

Colin Spencer

THERE IS A HORRIBLE relationship between capitalism and good food. Not the obvious one, that the more money you have the better you eat, for this is not necessarily so. Expensive meals are often gold-plated shit. No, the relationship I mean was most vividly illustrated and daily celebrated in the Crown Colony of Hong Kong.

From the air, it looks like Legoland by the sea. Once in its midst, it is the personification of Fritz Lang's vision of the future Metropolis: walkways arch across motorways raucous with brake, tyre and horn, twisting between concrete-and-glass monuments to mammon; the human form is dwarfed and crammed into bleak, concrete channels, so that humanity becomes a lemming herd, elbow to elbow, moving *en masse* with intense deliberation to whatever secretarial cupboard the computer signals them to. In this hell, where an architect of genius could have designed a new city for people, as well as the existing context for gross and abundant profit, there are 8,000 restaurants, all of them crowded with queues.

On first sight, the queues reminded me of post-war Britain waiting for its snoek and gravy: a far and distant cry from the food of Hong Kong, which is of a persistent, almost indescribable excellence. I was there for four days, without a guide or friend, so took pot luck. Unable to be led by my nose — for all the smells inhaled were so exquisite that the salivary glands tingled in constant anticipation — I entered any restaurant where there was a free table.

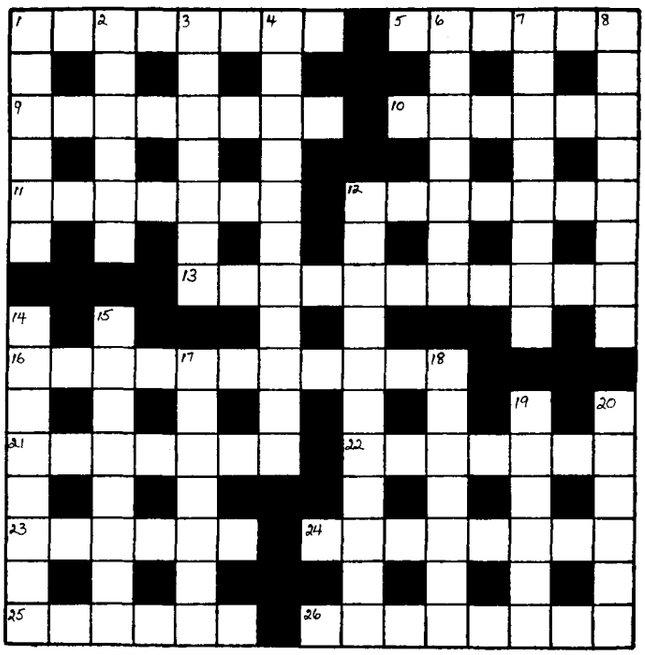
I always ate cheaply and astonishingly well. And so constantly good was the food that I was led to contemplate this strange relationship between big business and genuine sensuality. We are all familiar with the connection between money and fake pleasure, the massage parlours and the sparkling wine costing £50 a bottle, but Hong Kong had silk lingerie looking like Janet Reger for a tenner and a meal for five quid which, once tasted, should have plunged the Roux brothers into rags and ashes. Then there was the vegetarian restaurant, unhappily called Vegi Feed Kitchen, which had a queue which went around the block waiting for a table. Vegetarians in Hong Kong, with its abundant shell fish, crispy fowl and pork? Surely not.

I knew that silk knickers and a well seasoned duck breast both stemmed from a superfluity of cheap labour, but this, in other places, produces tasteless goods. Here it produced excellence. Hong Kong food has built on ancient Eastern traditions of care and respect for the quality of the ingredients eaten, but somehow the bleakness of the work conditions, the lack of human warmth, the messy chaotic detail of people's lives which had all been swept away on the boats (how rare it was even to see a shrine with its lamp and neat heap of tangerines glimpsed between washing hung out to dry) seemed to be behind a compulsive provocation to make the daily food a constant banquet and celebration. Here, across the table, there existed the only real communication between family, friends and lovers and in the choice and huge range of variegated delicacies was somehow the people's true identity — elsewhere completely submerged by the weight of the dollar.

Here is a selection of some of those morsels: local fat prawns steamed with garlic and onion; straw mushrooms stuffed wth a shrimp paste with *al dente* broccoli in a thin crab sauce; mixed local vegetables with black beans and chilli; minced quail wrapped in lettuce leaves; stuffed crab claws; deep-fried stuffed scallops. Much of this must sound familiar to anyone who regularly visits a

Weekend Crossword 1547

PRIZE: £10 Book Token for the first correct solution opened. Entries to Crossword 1547, New Statesman, 14-16 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU by first post 24 February.



Name_____

Address_____

ACROSS

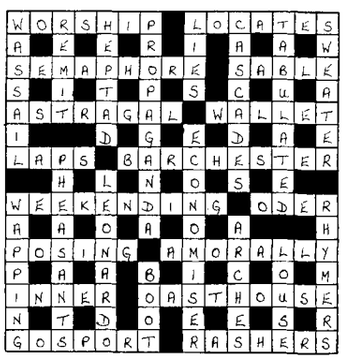
1. Never sit about, for this is what to do with money (8)
5. Alias monkey-bread (6)
9. Discontinue meetings in favour of a criminal (8)
10. Material which provides relations with the means of building walls (6)
11. Unconquering underwear? (7)
12. Appear breathless about the match although calm (7)
13. Quietness in which we hear the agency for ever (11)
16. Van with messengers for the leader (5,6)
21. Serious listener with a comfortable place to sit (7)
22. Eager to get a point in mixed tennis (7)
23. Girl with underwear to get rid of (6)
24. Doing down by getting what used to be six in one throw (8)
25. Full of enthusiasm right where there is fighting (6)
26. Agreement in the crew makes sense (8)

DOWN

1. Rushing waters are quiet during attacks (6)
2. I stop going round so here is something on the map (6)
3. Passionate, crudely making love in front of them (7)
4. Where rackets are used to crush the law (6,5)
6. One who flies a girl over a mountain (7)
7. Causes of illness are in the rotten crab I ate (8)
8. Change remains when there are ropes (8)
12. Possibly one is held by a powerful friend (11)
14. Transgressor who makes a proposal about death (8)
15. Fishing waters for a fellow motorist (8)?
17. No tears are shed for crime (7)
18. Objectionable people who are animal at heart (7)
19. Last instalment put in to spend in good time (6)
20. Hot number is top (6)

SETSQUARE

Solution to 1545



Prizewinner to 1545

Bill Scott
(Downham Market, Norfolk)

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Chinese restaurant here, yet the point of this food was that the mushrooms were stuffed with minced shrimp and only egg to bind it. Over here, such a stuffing would have so much cornflour in it that the taste would be insipid and the feel on the palate tacky. Or take, for example, the minced quail. It was flavoured with onion, garlic and fresh coriander. It had a tiny smidgeon of steamed buckwheat to give a little body and it was served on crisp lettuce so that you made the parcels yourself, while there were three dipping sauces to choose from — one of chilli, one of thick ginger and soy and one of light soy.

My only mistake was to order a Chinese rice wine called Wu Chia Pi Chew. It smelt and tasted of ancient, rotting hay unchanged from a month in the stables. It had the kind of alcoholic bite you might get from a rabid dog. I suspected it had at least the eye of a newt in it. I gagged on one glass and have brought the rest back for analysis.

I also, at last, made a visit to the vegetarian restaurant (a notice in the window politely asks people not to bring meat inside). I shared a table with two Chinese who had just returned from Canada. They were carnivores but wanted a light lunch and were eating something that looked like barbecued pork and steamed chicken in oyster sauce. I ordered a couple of dishes and we all ended up sharing each other's meal. Their pork and chicken were, of course, tofu, but simulated to seem and even taste like the real thing. I had a soup of asparagus and sweetcorn, then tofu with chilli, ginger and garlic and tofu shaped like a flat fish with crisp rice scales in a sweet and sour sauce. There were sautéed mushrooms and fungi with spring onions and peppers. Our meals came to about six pounds each. I told them that, if a Chinese vegetarian restaurant opened in London, or any of our major cities, and was of this quality, it would be a wild and run-away success. They said proudly that Toronto already had one. □

Weekend competition

No 2962 **Set by Alison Prince**

I'm not entirely sure we're still allowed to mock the Alliance in this magazine, but . . . 'The time has come' is to be their new slogan and, as everyone knows, is taken from a line of Lewis Carroll's 'The Walrus and the Carpenter'. Could we have appropriate Alliance rewrites of more of that poem: three verses (18 lines) maximum, for Wednesday 25 February.

No 2959 **Set by E. O. Parrott**

Aids warnings from the likes of Patience Strong, Wilhelmina Stitch and Barbara Cartland.

Report **By Gray Dorn**

It's been a helluva week. First we in the competition section have endured all the inconvenience of Special Branch raids — keeping them supplied with lager, forced at gunpoint to explain all three-syllable words — with none of the media attention lavished on our star journalist (I managed to fool Finnish TV but that hardly counts). Then we get abusive letters from you lot (I have never been called 'aleatoric' before, Alan Clark, and I never forget a name). And finally, because of this week's subject, I've been reading far too much about Aids for my own sanity. About Dan-Air, for example, the airline you always end up on when all the good ones are fully booked, and their discrimination against male cabin staff on the grounds that '30%' of applicants are gay and that this might pose a hazard to passengers. Or about *Wiener*, the closest Austrians can manage to a designer mag, which has just referred to Aids carriers as 'terrorists and murderers'. Happy days. Which only left your entries to cheer me up. Which they did. £8 to the winners. Thanks.

Do you know that dreadful feeling when your happiness goes reeling? Grass is green and skies are sunny, bees are busy with their honey; then your peace is rent asunder, everything seems black as thunder, in a trice the glory fades — suddenly you've thought of AIDS? Cheer up now, no need to sigh or of ignorance to die if you'll only follow me and observe my Rule of Three. First, when shooting up, take care; never, never, *never* share. Next, if you'd stay blithe and bonny, always wear a rubber johnny. And a third rule in conclusion, never need a blood transfusion. Keep these little rules of mine and all Earth's bounty shall be thine.

NOEL PETTY

I've got to tell you now, dears,
About an awful thing.
And anyone can get it, dears,
From pauper up to king.

You know when you had flu, dears,
It wasn't very nice,
Well very careful you must be,
Or you'll pay a much worse price.

When you play Mums and Dads, dears,
The risks are very high,
And if you're playing Dads and Dads,
You soon will wave goodbye.

So Janet stick with John, dears,
And John don't play with James,
For AIDS will put a stop, dears,
To all your little games.

JONATHAN TAYLOR

Hats above and boots below
Protect you if you've donned 'em;
And midships, every scout should know,
It's wise to wear a condom.

DAVID CRAM

Sex can be a wondrous blessing, like an angel from above, when your body is expressing ardour for the one you love. God has made his dispensation — marriage as a lifelong state. Spurn the lure of fornication; settle with a single mate. But for those whose carnal urges make their thoughts and deeds impure — don't indulge in reckless splurges; use a condom, be secure.

BASIL RANSOME-DAVIES

The summer raindrops fall in showers
And tumble pollen from the flowers,
Yet as I walk 'twixt copses green
No storm can pierce my gaberdine.
The streams that run 'midst tangled roots
Are staunchly spurned by dubbined boots.
So, too, we walk through life's sweet vale
And, meeting others on the trail
(As pluvius meets a tough caghoul),
We should recall this single rule:
However safe may seem the clime,
We should wear rubber every time.

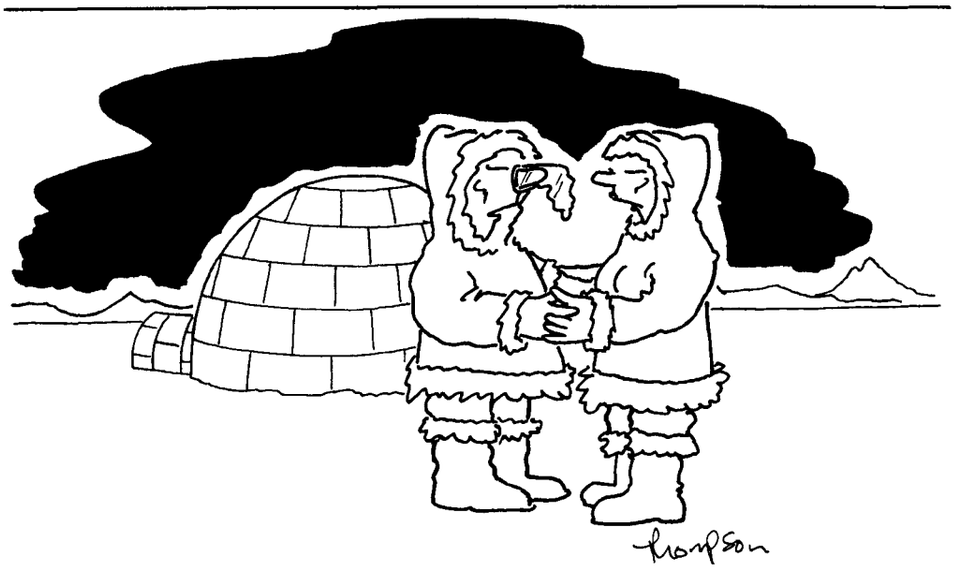
LISSA EVANS

The worthy gardener tills his soil with solitary care — He makes his plot a fertile spot, a place of beauty rare . . . God tests the gardener — sending pests, diseases, frost and weeds — The faithful grower shields each flower, with spray and hoe and sheaths. So with our earthly loves we must aidless our gardens keep, till petals — fallen from love's rose — meet pure life's compost heap. Temptations lure us from all sides, but those who break God's rules — of husbandry within their lives — corrupt love's garden tools . . . Yet God is merciful to us — Our weakness none knows better — To keep love's roses free from taint, He sent us the French letter.

M. E. AULT

Ladies and Gentlemen, it may have come to your notice that there is a nasty disease spreading amongst us, for which, I am reliably informed, there is no cure. It is of a sexual nature and I would like to offer you some advice. If you find yourself in a situation whereby coupling is impossible to avoid, Gentlemen, you simple MUST acquire, discreetly, a French Letter. I am told these are to cover your private part and protect you from infection. A note to the Ladies; if one's husband has wandered occasionally, then be on your guard. Remember, it is your marital duty to fulful your husband's 'requirements'. If you cannot be certain that he has NOT come into contact with the disease, then I beg you; NEVER, NEVER, use his toothbrush or shave your legs with his razor.

LIZA RYMER



"But Freja we don't want to die of ignorance"

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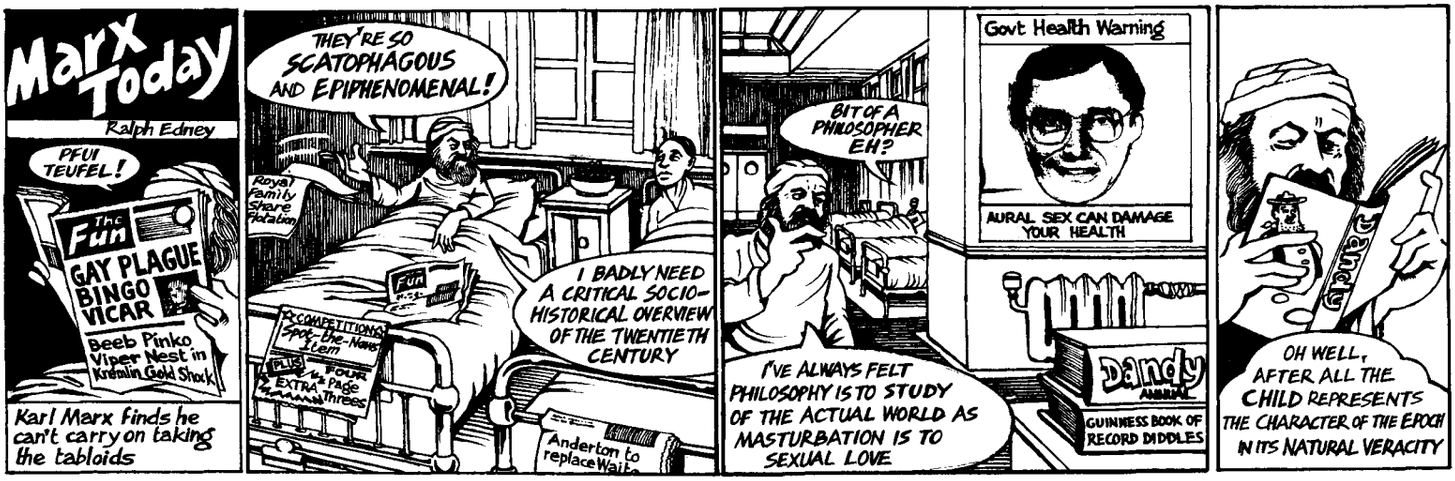

Marx Today
Ralph Edney
PFUI TEUFEL!
The Fun
GAY PLAGUE BINGO VICAR
Beeb Pinko Viper Nest in Kremlin Gold Shock!
Karl Marx finds he can't carry on taking the tabloids
THEY'RE SO SCATOPHAGOUS AND EPIPHENOMENAL!
Royal Family Share Vacation
Fun
COMPETITIONS
Spot the News Item
Four EXTRA Page Threes
I BADLY NEED A CRITICAL SOCIO-HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY
Anderton to replace Waite
BIT OF A PHILOSOPHER EH?
I'VE ALWAYS FELT PHILOSOPHY IS TO STUDY OF THE ACTUAL WORLD AS MASTURBATION IS TO SEXUAL LOVE
Govt Health Warning
AURAL SEX CAN DAMAGE YOUR HEALTH
Dandy Annual
GUINNESS BOOK OF RECORD DIDDLES
Dandy
OH WELL, AFTER ALL THE CHILD REPRESENTS THE CHARACTER OF THE EPOCH IN ITS NATURAL VERACITY

Chess

TEN YEARS ago Nigel Short qualified for the British championship just a few days before his twelfth birthday and started us thinking we might at last have a world-beater of the Fischer class. From child prodigy to top grandmaster is a hard road, but now everything seems to be coming together for Nigel. In the latest FIDE rating list he is ranked 7th in the world, alongside Hübner and ahead of such illustrious names as Portisch, Spassky, Tal, Timman and Vaganian. Wijk aan Zee, as usual a tournament of quality, was his first outing of 1987. Nigel turned the event into a demonstration of his growing mastery by sharing first place with Korchnoi on 9½ out of 13.

Here is one of the games that Nigel didn't win — a draw, but far from dull:

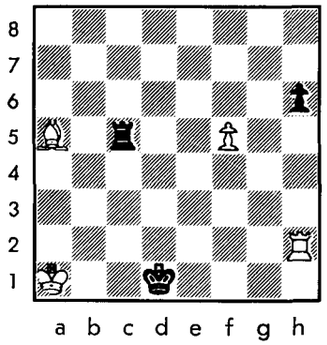
Short-van der Sterren, Wijk aan Zee 1987. Two Knights.
1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bc4 Nf6 4. Ng5 d5 5. exd5 Na5 6. Bb5 + c6 7. dxc6 bxc6 8. Be2 h6 9. Nf3 e4 10. Ne5 Bd6 A well-known counter-gambit line, playable for either side, though I would say Black has more than enough for his pawn. **11. d4 exd3 12. Nxd3 Qc7 13. b3 Bf5** In Mestel-Flear from last year's GLC tournament 13 . . . 0-0 14. Bb2 Bf5 15. Nd2 Rad8 16. h3 c5 17. 0-0 c4 resulted in a brilliant victory for Black. But of course Short knows this, and van der Sterren knows that he knows it . . . **14 Bb2 0-0-0!? 15. Nd2 Rhe8** Black has an enormous lead in development and White can't get castled. **16. Kf1! Kb8** This seems rather too slow. I prefer 16 . . . Nd5, intending to eliminate an important defender with . . . Nf4. **17. b4 Nb7 18. a3 Bxh2 19. Nf3 Bg4 20. Bxf6 gxf6 21. Ng1 Bf5 22. g3 Bxg1** 22 . . . Bxg3. 23. fxg3 Qxg3 24. Qe1 is not sound. **23. Kxg1 Rd4 24. Rxh6** Black is still active, but his pawns are mangled. In my view 24. Qd2, with Bf3 and Re1 to follow, would give White a positionally won game. **Nd6 25. Bf1 Bg4 26. Qd2 Nf5 27. Rxf6 Nxg3** This only half works, but Black has to go in for it. **28. fxg3 Re2! 29. Qf4!** Definitely not 29. Bxe2? Qxg3 + 30. Kh1 Bf3 + and Rh4 + . As played White is getting two Rooks for his Queen. **Rxf4 30. Rxf4 Qe7! 31. Bxe2 Qe3 + 32. Kh2 Qxe2 + 33. Rf2 Qe8 34. Re1 Qh8 + 35. Kg1 Be6** The Black Bishop defends his pawns and threatens to get nasty on the d5-h1 diagonal. Still, I think 36. Ne5! should win, e.g. 36 . . . Qh3 37. Re3 Bd5 38. Rh2. **36. Rfe2 Qh3 37. Rg2 Qh8 38. Rge2 Qh3 39. Kf2** Still trying! **Qh2 + 40. Kf3 Bd5 + 41. Kg4 f5 + 42. Kxf5 ½-½.** Black would play 42 . . . Qh5 + 43. Kf6 Qf7 + 44. Ke5 Qg7 + 45. Kf4 Qh6 + with perpetual.

I promised to renew the *New Statesman*'s tradition of organising competitions for the composition of studies. Now I have the pleasure of formally announcing the **Assiac Memorial Tourney** for studies. Entries are to be submitted, with a diagram of the position and the composer's intended solution, by 31 December. The tourney is dedicated to the memory of *Assiac*, our long-serving former columnist, who died last May. I stress that the competition is for studies rather than problems with mate in a specified number of moves. Adam Sobey, study editor of *The Problemist*, has generously offered to 'neutralise' the entries, so that there will be no question of judgement being swayed by the reputation of any composer.

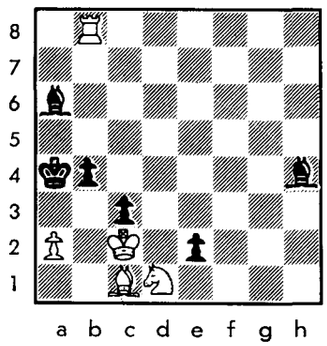
Previous *NS* study tourneys produced original works of the highest standard. Here (if faithful readers with long memories will pardon me) are two examples of what we are after. Since I want to call on your solving ability in checking the soundness of originals and hunting for cooks, I won't distract you by appending solutions (though we will give them next week). In any case, I don't suppose you will have too much difficulty with the first position, although its neat solution fully merited the 4th prize that it won for A.C. Miller in our 1966 tourney. White is to play and win.

The second position, by the famous Russian composer Kasparian, won 1st prize in 1962. White to play and draw. This one really is tough, so I will drop the hint that Black does get a new Queen — but, surprisingly enough, on a1.

First position



Second position



George Botterill

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This England

£3 Book Tokens for entries printed.
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☐ The CEGB are now attempting once again to change the design of the guide-tubes which hold the control rods. In the next few days, they will try to send particularly thin workmen down into the reactor — which is not yet radioactive. They will wriggle between the forest of pipes and attempt to bore new gas-holes in the tubes to change the flow. — *Observer* (B. Street)

☐ On another occasion last week Mr Golding was woken up at his London flat by the phone ringing. He picked up the receiver to hear a sergeant informing him that he was now going off duty at the end of his shift. 'Mrs Thatcher, as head of our security services, should have her attention drawn to the drop in the standards of phone-tapping because of the strike.' — *Observer* (L. F. Kerrigan)

☐ Chris Smith MP, on arriving chez Campbell last Sunday, was surprised to find one Special Branch officer counting the money in the journalist's Monopoly game, while another spent the afternoon leafing through an entire set of back issues of *New Socialist*. — *Daily Telegraph* (George Moor)

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